

PS *Extreme*

Volume 2 • Issue 2 • January 1997

THE PLAYER'S UNOFFICIAL MONTHLY GUIDE TO THE PLAYSTATION



The 1996 Extreme Awards
For Excellence in Gaming

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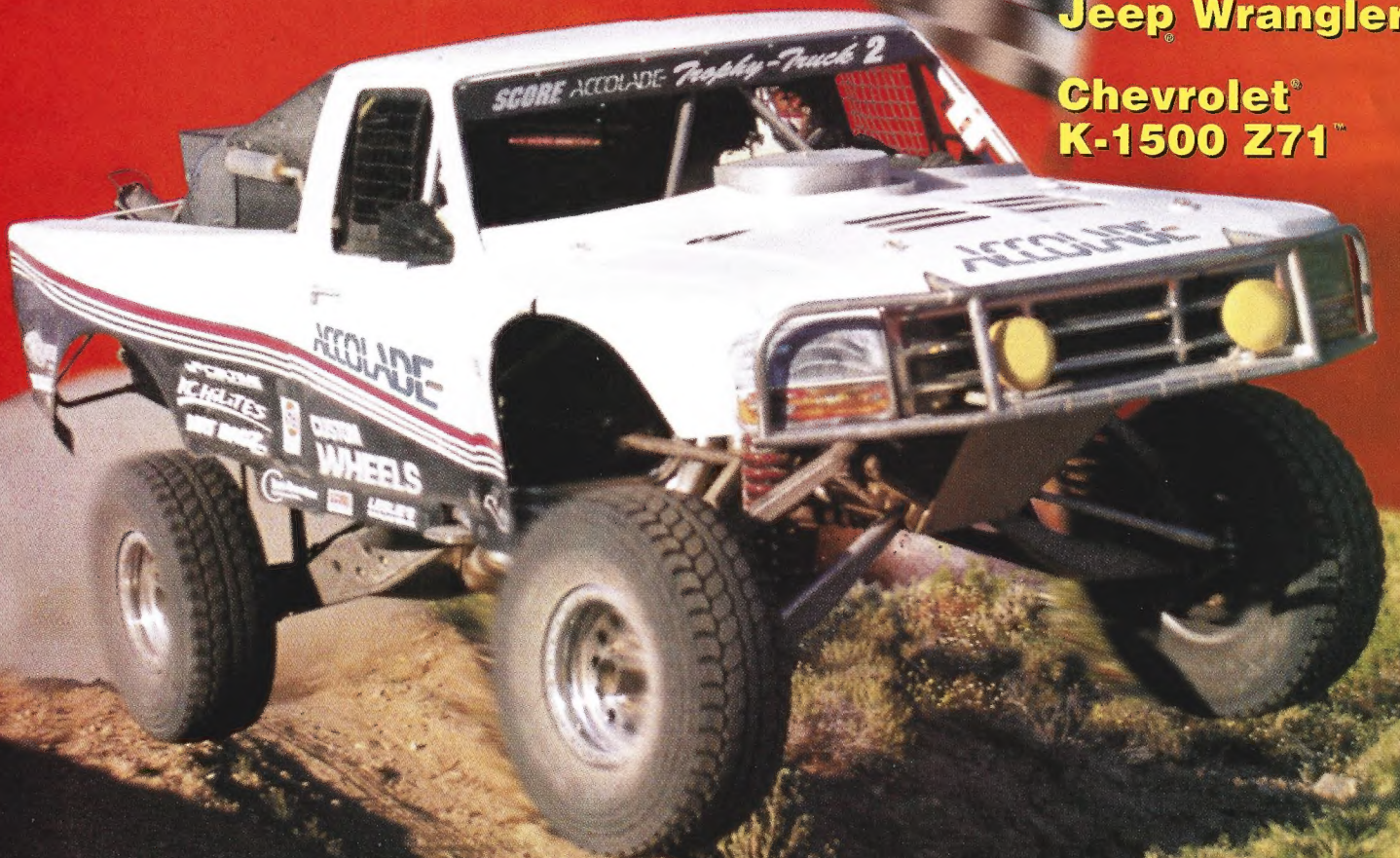
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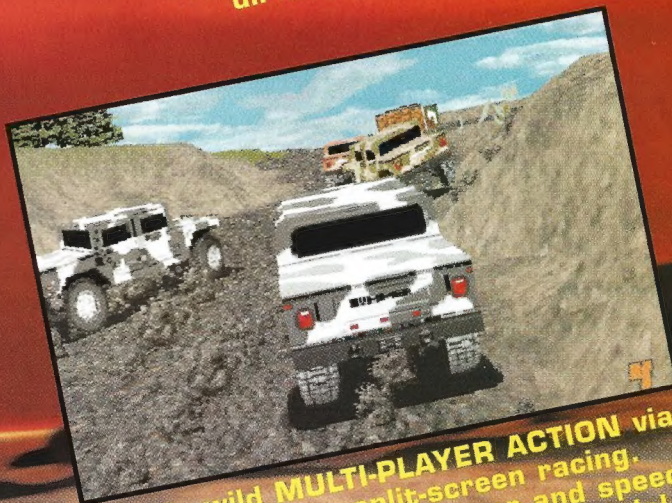
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EXNEWS: Page 16

PlayStation sales skyrocket, 3DO sees the light, Analog Game Pad on the way and Online with Zach is back.

EXECUTE: Page 22

More cheats than we thought would be possible to cram in the mag: Machinehead, Robotron X, Star Gladiator, Wipeout XL, Twisted Metal 2 and many more.

EXPECTING: Page 34

Hexen, Test Drive: Off Road, Jimmy Johnson Football, Soul Blade, Barb Wire, Powerslave and Tiger Shark all this month, all month long, no extra charge.

EXTREME: Page 56

The 1996 Extreme Awards. Check out the best of the year.

EXRATED: Page 62

We give the low-down this month on: Starwinder, 3D Baseball, Jet Moto, FIFA '97, Dark Forces, In the Zone 2, Suikoden, NBA Live '97, 2Xtreme, Dare Devil Derby, Mortal Kombat Trilogy, King's Field II, Power Move Pro Wrestling, Samurai Shodown 3 and Hardcore 4x4. Can you believe that? Look at all them reviews!

IN THE EXTREME



This issue marks the introduction of our annual editor's awards, "The 1996 Extreme Awards for Excellence in Gaming". As you will see, each editor voted on his favorite games in a number of categories, and has included his personal year-end summary. The tabulated results presented in the awards are the product of this voting. Many of you have a particular editor that, more or less, mirrors your own tastes in games. By giving each editor a chance at creating his own "year in review", we hope that you can take the 1996 Extreme Awards and use it as your holiday buyer's guide, and to help you in your post-Christmas purchasing decisions.

In the process of creating the Extreme Awards, we have decided to take the advice of many of you and create a new standard of excellence within the pages of EXRATED. From this issue forward, we will have a new category for the best of the best. Any game receiving a 98% score, or better, will be given "Platinum" status. These games will be distinguished from all other products as the best that the year had to offer. Additionally, the product's success will be noted by a special award presentation to the publisher of that title at E3 — our annual industry trade show.

As a PlayStation owner, and PSExtreme reader, you will have the

knowledge and our "seal of approval" that Platinum titles represent the very best in PlayStation gaming, and you can rest assured that your gaming dollar will be best spent on the very few games that achieve Platinum status. It's kind of funny, but we celebrate the introduction of this new high water mark by not giving it to any of the 15 games that we review in this issue! The Platinum status will be grandfathered in with older titles, so games like Tomb Raider, Crash Bandicoot, Tekken 2, NHL Face Off '97 and NCAA GameBreaker will be awarded the rarer metal.

And, speaking of those 15 games, we have a lot of stuff to show you in this special issue. A lot of sports games go under the knife in January, including NBA In the Zone 2, NBA Live 97, FIFA 97, Open Ice, 3D Baseball, Hardcore 4x4 and 2Xtreme. In addition, we take a close look at King's Field II, Dark Forces, Mortal Kombat Trilogy and more. It certainly isn't going to be hard to find something to put under the tree this year.

In closing, since most of you will be reading this just before Christmas, on behalf of all of us here at Dimension Publishing, I would like to wish you all a happy holiday season and a safe and prosperous new year — with TONS of games to play!

Dave

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- d) Just the intruders who piss you off (like Yurias).
- e) Most of the above.

2. How are you going to trap and kill the intruders?

- a) Spike them from the wall.
- b) Crush them with the Stomp.
- c) Zap them with the Volt Cage.
- d) Use Mind Kill.
- e) Most of the above.

3. What are you seeking?

- a) Revenge.
- b) Vengeance.
- c) Redemption.
- d) Acquittal.
- e) All of the above.

3. Are you really...

- a) A good guy.
- b) A bad guy.
- c) A victim of circumstance.
- d) A wimp.
- e) All of the above.



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Dear PSExtreme,

Enclosed is a check for my subscription. I'm 29 years old and have been gaming since the start of things (Pong, Breakout, etc.). My favorite game of all time is Gauntlet 2. I wish someone would release it for a home system. I've really enjoyed the "classic" games that Namco and Williams have released for the PS. I'd like to see others done like Frenzy, Berzerk, Star Castle, Wizard of Wor, and the list goes on... I have about 20 games for the Sony PlayStation and I find your reviews RIGHT ON. I can't wait for Bubsy 3D, Rayman 2, Final Fantasy 7 and Namco Museum Volume 3. Looks like it's gettin' better. Please keep the accurate reviews and fresh Game Shark codes coming. Congrat's on a great mag from one of the video game grandfathers still playin'...

Cliff Horick II
Scranton, PA

Dear Cliff,

Thank you for the kind words and we couldn't agree more about bringing out "fresh" versions of classic games. If rumor holds true, it is quite possible that we will see 3D versions of Joust and Centipede in 1997 — and there are many other titles under consideration. We assume that you've probably purchased and/or played Robotron X by now and, if you take a look in our EXECUTE section, you'll find some tasty Robotron X codes to nibble on. As far as that list of games you can't wait for, neither can we. Let us know how you like Bubsy 3D, cuz we think its one of this year's sleepers and an instant classic.

Yo Extreme,

Your magazine is the grand piece of bologna, in my eyes. (That is a good thing.) Now that I have that out of the way, I was wondering if you could provide me with the Game Shark code for X-Com UFO Defense that allows you to have unlimited money? And, if possible, any other codes for this marvel of a game. Pretty, pretty please, print my letter. The big turkey is counting on you!

Sincerely,
The Upholder of Goat Cheese
Paul Jordan
Cridersville, Ohio

Dear Cheesy Turkey Bologna Buddy,

The codes that you requested ran in the June issue of PSExtreme and we briefly considered making you buy a back issue. But, how can we resist a request from the dozens of people that purchased the game, and one with such a passion for dairy products and meat by-products?

INFINITE CASH	D000E110 2000
	800CEE36 OFFF
INFINITE SHOTS	D00074C8 3170
FIRST SOLDIER	800146CC 0014

There are two more, but we figured we'd leave you hanging ... because, well, that's just the mood we're in!

To Workers at PSExtreme,

I have been a gamer all of my life. I've owned anything that was a great system, at the time. Now, I have a PlayStation, and it is great! But, I'm worried that the new Nintendo 64 will take all of the business from PlayStation, or maybe the M2 will. Will PlayStation become what 3DO has become (a dust collector in my closet)?

I also do not know what to buy. There is Bubsy 3D, or there is the cool Crash Bandicoot ... which is better? Or, I might buy Tecmo Super Bowl or Madden 97, or another football game... which is better?

Love Your Magazine,
Rick Carr
Joliet, IL

We think that we can answer your first question, regarding platform competition by asking you one: Are any of the games you just mentioned as purchase possibilities coming out for either Nintendo 64 or the mythical, pie-in-the-sky, vaporware M2? In a word, NO. As to the specifics of the product comparisons, just check out our reviews of those four titles in the September through December issues of PSExtreme... that will give you the straight scoop.

As far as Nintendo and the M2 are concerned... one has two games (at press time) and the other lets you manipulate a donut with video wrapped around it — they shouldn't concern you. At last check, Sony and its third party partners were approaching over 150 games in the marketplace. Your investment should be safe for the next couple of years!

Dear PSExtreme,

I am one of your die-hard fans. All of your articles and coverage; from EXECUTE to EXRATED and EXPORT, are X-cellent. You guys are the best. My big brother and I were arguing about this letter. He told me that you guys make up letters and that this letter won't be printed at all. He and I placed a bet. And, please help me... I need codes for King of Fighters '95 and Samurai Shodown III. Please help me. I will really be glad and happy. Thanks a lot and more power to you.

Karlo Marquez
Diamond Bar, Colorado

Dear Little Bro',

You win baby! (Might we also add, for those of you desperate to get your letters published that the surest way to get any magazine to print it is to accuse them of making up letters!) As far as the codes you requested are concerned ... ennh, can't help you, those games stink. Shivers go up and down our collective spines just thinking about them. And let us add, authorita-

tively, that we ABSOLUTELY DO NOT MAKE UP LETTERS!

Dear PSExtreme,

I want you big boys ... I want you bad. I love old arcade games and you can play all night, as far as I'm concerned. I make six figures and am willing to share my wealth and my heart with ONLY you guys.

Hugs and Kisses,
Jenny McCarthy

Dear PSExtreme,

I am a big fan of the classic game CD's by Namco and Williams. I also love to play war simulations like Panzer and Allied General. My Questions are:

- 1) I know Namco is coming out with more classic volumes, but what about Williams and other companies?
- 2) Will we see any classic volumes that include Space Invaders, Missile Command, Asteroids, Centipede, Millipede, Pong, BreakOut, Wizard of Wor, Mr. Do!, and 1942 Battle of the Midway?
- 3) Will SSI come out with an updated General that includes current weapons? Hey!! SSI, how about a general where you can select the playing field with equal amounts of cash and place your troops from the very beginning. Get away from the part where you start off with pre-placed troops and can only buy a few troops. Let me decide what I want to fight with.
- 4) I have to disagree with your rating on Namco's Volume II. It should've been at least a 90%. Mappy, Grobda, and Xevious make this Volume a Gold.
- 5) I've heard there is a trick to reveal a hidden classic game on Volume II, is this True?

Thank You,
Rob Stoner

1) Williams/Midway is coming out with a new collection that will include: Battlezone, Asteroids, Centipede, Missile Command, Tempest and Space Invaders.

2) See #1

3) Companies will only release sequels if the originals sold well.

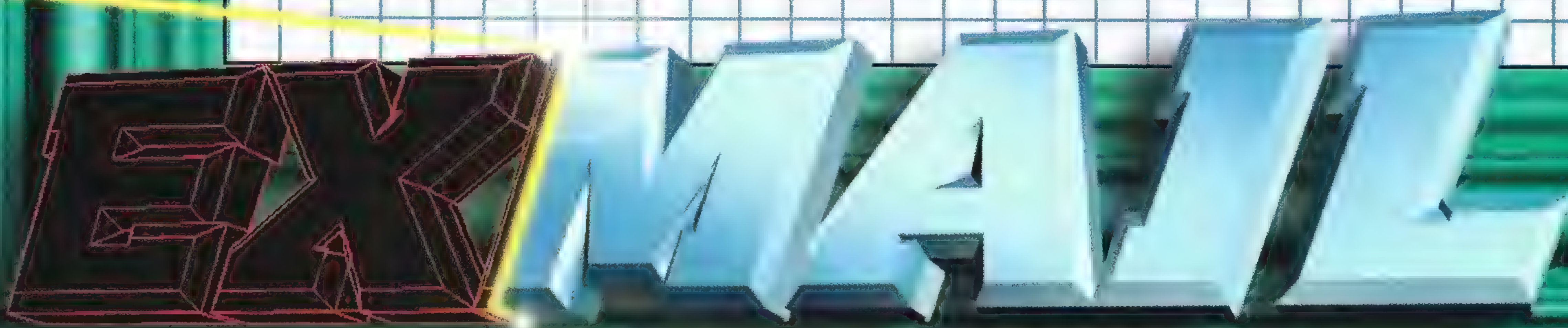
4) These classic collections are subject to very personal opinions. Some of us could care less for the classics, others just go bananas.

5) The U.S. version of Volume II was changed from the Japanese version. It has Super PacMan in place of an obscure Japanese game called "Cutie" that was never released in America. While it's possible that Cutie could be hidden on the U.S. version, we don't know about it. We'll look into it and put something in the next EXECUTE if it turns out to be true.

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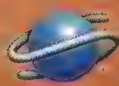
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PlayStation Gaming News

From Around The Globe

THE SEVEN MILLION UNIT COMPANY

In a recent press release, the father—or mother, depending on your particular gender bias—of the PlayStation declared, that in just over a year, worldwide shipments (not units sold to consumers, but units shipped to retailers) of the PlayStation have topped 7.2 million. The figure breaks down to 3.5 million in Japan, 2.1 million in North America, and 1.6 million in Europe. Sony further boasted that over 15 first and third-party titles have sold 250,000+ copies, with ten more titles estimated to have hit the magic quarter-million mark at the end of 1996. Sony's new budget-pricing structure for older games has also paid off; the first six games dropped to the new \$39.99 MSRP (Destruction Derby, NFL GameDay, NHL Face Off, Twisted Metal, WarHawk, and WipeOut) sold over 150,000 units combined in the first month of the program.

The two biggest PlayStation-exclusive third-party games thus far are Tekken 2, which sold 450,000 units in THREE weeks, and Resident Evil, which is about to surpass the half-million mark.

"It is our belief that Resident Evil could have only been brought to life on the PlayStation," said Greg Ballard, head honcho of Capcom.

"The incredible sales success of the title is proof that consumers have never seen anything like it." What do all these big numbers mean? Simply that the PlayStation is doing very well, thanks to a

great library of software, and that the Nintendo 64-considered the PlayStation's biggest threat in the U.S.-still has plenty of catching up to do.

3DOes PLAYSTATION

In spite of Trip Hawkins' public disdain for all that is "32-bit", it seems that Redwood City, California based, The 3DO Company will soon be delivering titles for the PlayStation. Let's see M2... no looka like it be comin' out in this century (we have it on good authority that M2 stands for "Maybe 2000") so we better spin some coin on Sony's machine... makes sense to us. 3DO's first PS title will be Army Men, which is rumored to be based on animated toy soldiers, similar to those found in Disney's Toy Story. While details are sketchy at this time, our best information, at the moment, tells us that the game will ship during the first quarter of next year... we'll keep you posted.

SONY TO MARKET ANALOG GAMEPAD

During the recent PlayStation expo in Japan, Sony Computer Entertainment of Japan had on display, a cool new analog gamepad for the PlayStation. Although details are sketchy as of our press date, the pad will allow for full 360 degree movement and will include a

form of tactile feedback. Apparently, when players use the pad in certain games (which will,



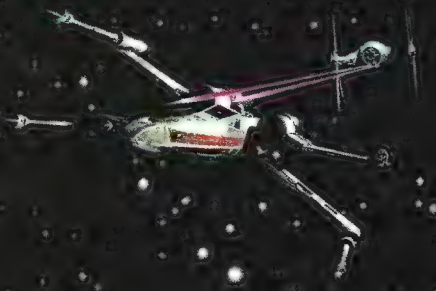
Conceptual sketch of the prototype Analog Pad from Sony

no doubt, have to be programmed from scratch, with the new pad in mind), there will be a mechanical reaction to impact in the game. No official release date has been set and there is no confirmation of an American release, either. Our best guess is that there is a "killer application" in development for 1997 that is going to make this pad a necessary peripheral in any self-respecting PlayStation owner's collection... time will tell!

ASCII TO SHIP ENHANCED ASCII PAD

Redwood City, California based ASCII Entertainment will be bringing an upgraded version of their popular AsciiPad to the PlayStation in December. The new pad will feature Turbo Speed, Automatic Turbo Fire, Slow

NEWS



T H E N E W E S T

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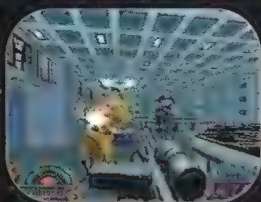
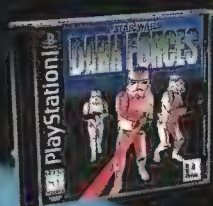
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PlayStation Gaming News

From Around The Globe



Motion and a 7' long cord, as well as the ergonomic comfort and design quality that ASCII products are known for. The Pad will be shaped more like Sony's standard controller than ASCII's previous pads, but will be larger than the standard pad, in order to better suit the average American's large hands. We'll take this baby out for a test drive early next year.

SONY FINALIZES ITS SQUARE DEAL

Sony Computer Entertainment America announced that it will be publishing Squaresoft's Final Fantasy VII when it comes stateside next year, as part of



a five title publishing deal. Although this partnership was rumored to be "imminent" for some time now, Sony and Square have played it close to the vest in Japan. Tobal No. 1, Square's first PlayStation game in America, recently shipped to retail with a pack-in demo of FF7 and anticipation is running high for this game next year. The Final Fantasy series is one of the all-time best selling line of video games in Japan, transcending time, technology and platform, and Sony is hoping that the same magic will be felt in America next year. Look for more coverage of Final Fantasy VII within the pages of PSExtreme as it becomes available.

THE GOLDEN BEAR PROWLING ON PLAYSTATION

San Jose, California based Accolade will be bringing their popular Jack Nicklaus Golf series to the PlayStation early next year. Over the past few years, the Jack Nicklaus series has been a standard-bearer in the PC world and Accolade is confident that the PlayStation market will embrace the Golden Bear as well. While the game is still in the initial planning stages, Accolade is considering a number of features that will appeal to the console gamer, in addition to the solid simulation play, for which the series is known. We can expect to see the game sometime near the end of the first quarter.

ONLINE WITH ZACH

Feeling a bit saucy this month, I decided to sow the seeds of opinion on the Internet by posting this message to rec.games.video.sony:

...
Hi there. My name is Zach Meston, and I'm a contributing editor to PSExtreme magazine. One of my regular duties for this lovable-yet-humble publication is writing a column in the EXNEWS section called "Online With Zach," in which I shamelessly crib a few interesting and/or amusing messages from PS newsgroups. We'll be doling out our first annual Extreme Awards in the January issue, so I'd like to solicit your participation in a poll, the results of which will appear in my January OWZ column. Here's all you gotta do: Tell me what you think are the three WORST PlayStation games of 1996. Include an interesting and/or amusing comment for each choice if you so desire. An example (which I just now noticed uses three Acclaim games—gee, there's a shock):

1. D
The D stands for "Did I really just beat this game in two hours?"
2. Revolution X
Revolting.
3. Rise of the Robots 2: Resurrection
It should have stayed dead.

...
The responses came flooding in, starting with Gary Wolfe: "Madden '97—for those who really hate to lose. You can't."

AF Hoosier seconds Gary's emotion: "We waited 2 years for EA to port their SNES game to the PSX!!"

Brad Herizing—looks like it's time to buy a vowel there, Brad—gives up his (typo-filled) list of stinkers and uses a word that would fly on the dirty, filthy Internet, but requires censorious asterisks in this family publication:

"1. Criticom. 2. Kiliak the DNA imperative. 3. Off world Extreme, 4by4, these suck donkey ****."

Perhaps the most unusual message of the bunch was this missive from Matt Arnold:

"Usenet is an amazing place. No matter what you say, you will be flamed. Be especially careful when you criticize a game. What you perceive as the all-time-worst game is undoubtedly someone else's favorite. There are, however, two games which no one defends. These two games have entered the record books as being the world's worst PSX games. It's not a matter of opinion. The fact remains that these two games are pure punishment to play. You'll be hard pressed to find worse games on any platform. The two worst games of all time are: Jupiter Strike and Killing Zone. Thank you. Have a nice day."

The ironic part, Matt, is that I gave Jupiter Strike a Silver X rating, you jerk.

You can email your thoughts directly into Zach's brain by addressing your correspondences to:
zmeston@denmark-c.it.earthlink.net

EX NEWS

You blasted your way
through an onslaught of
undead marines and hell
-spawned hordes in Doom.

Now you can rest, right? Wrong.

Seems flesh-eating mutants
have the mortality rate
of a cockroach and are

alive and kicking in Final
Doom- the last of the
legendary Doom products.

It's 30 new levels complete
with all new stories
(Evilution & The Plutonia
Experiment), new frighteningly

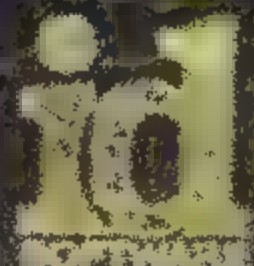
realistic graphics and
K&N pulse
pounding music. It's time
to finish what you started.

OLD SOLDIERS NEVER DIE, THEY JUST TURN INTO BLOODTHIRSTY

MUTANT ZOMBIES



MIDWAY



Now available on
Sony PlayStation

FINAL
DOOM™
End of story.

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SEND US YOUR CODES AND WIN BIG PRIZES!

Each month we'll pick the best code sent in by our loyal and intelligent readers and send that person a brand spankin' new copy of ASCII's hot new RPG for the PlayStation, King's Field II (that's right, II, the sequel is ready!) or, if fighting's your thing, ASCII's SpecializedStick (you decide.) But wait! That's not all; if you act now we'll also include ASCII's super stylish SpecializedPad for the PlayStation, for your controlling pleasure, PLUS twelve (12) free issues of the best, the only, monthly dedicated PlayStation magazine, PSExtreme, of course! Whoa! That's a lot of cool stuff for just a code; what are you waiting for?

WE HAVE A WINNER!

Congratulations and thanks go to this month's winner, Daniel Rhodes of Charleston, WV. He was the man with the postal skills to get us these awesome Mortal Kombat Trilogy codes before anyone else! We were bombarded with hordes and hordes of MKT codes the very next day, but they were just too slow! Daniel, your King's Field II and other goodies are on the way. Good job, buddy!

Mortal Kombat Trilogy



SECRET KONFIGURATION MENU:

In the options screen, hold ↑+L1+L2+R1+R2 until the screen shakes. The ? will no be selectable for more options.

RANDOM SELECT:

Press ↑+Start

SELECT KOMBAT ZONE:

Highlight Sonya or Human Smoke and press ↑+Start, select Kombat Zone after the Kombatants have been selected.

PLAY AS CHAMELEON:

Select any male ninja (not the cyborg ones):

Player 1: Hold ←+HP+HK+Block+Run before any round until he appears.

Player 2: Hold →+HP+HK+Block+Run.

CONTEST RULES: Anyone of any age can enter. The only people not eligible to win are employees of Dimension Publishing or ASCII Entertainment, their friends, family, pets and anyone they talk to or know of. Dimension Publishing reserves the right to make any and all decisions regarding the contest. One winner per month will be chosen, at Dimension Publishing's discretion, based on the code or trick supplied by the entrant. If you win but do not specify, in your code submission, which prize you want to receive (King's Field or an ASCII Specialized Stick), then we will choose for you.

Machinehead



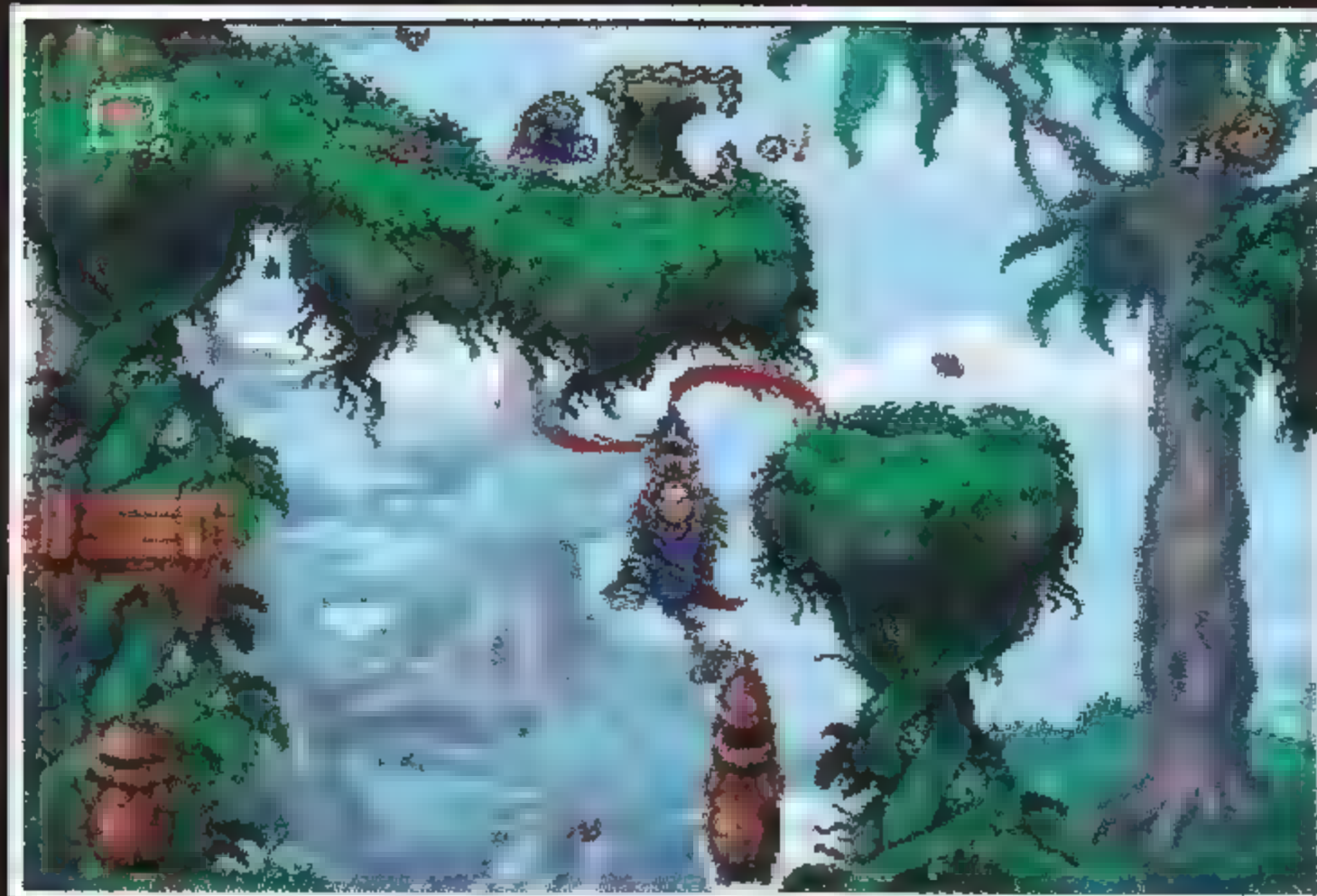
Enter the following at the main menu:

AMMO: 0, 0, 0, 0, L1, 0, L1, L1, 0, L1, 0, L1, L1, 0, L1, L1, L1, L1, L1, L1

ENERGY: 0, L1, L1, L1, 0, L1, 0, 0, L1, 0, 0, L1, L1, L1, L1, 0, 0, L1

LEVEL SELECT: L1, 0, L1, L1, L1, 0, 0, 0, 0, L1, L1, 0, 0, L1, 0, L1, 0, 0, 0, 0

The Adventures of Lomax in Lemmingland



LEVEL SELECT: Press ↓ and START, press and hold ↑, press and hold L1, press Δ, 0, X, □. A number appears to the left of Lomax. Press and hold ↑, L1, SELECT, and START to skip levels.

HELICOPTER: Use the Level Select cheat, then select the helicopter and press L1 and □ to zoom around.

Rainbow Islands

SECRET ROOM: Collect the seven gems in the proper order of color (red, orange, yellow, green, light blue, dark blue, mauve) and you gain access to a secret room. Go through the silver door at the end of the level and you don't have to fight the boss. The secret room on Island 5 has a box you should take, and a gate that leads to Island 7.

There's a handy trick to collecting gems: the screen is split vertically into invisible "stripes." When a gem falls, its color is determined by the stripe into

which it fell. Kill enemies in the proper stripe to get the colored gem you need.

Star Gladiator



PLAY AS BILSTEIN: To play as the final boss, Bilstein, enter this code on the character select screen. In Arcade Mode, put the cursor on Hayato, press and hold Select, move the cursor right to Gore, press XOXO□□ΔΔΔΔ+X.

PLAY AS KAPPAH: To play as the hidden mid-boss, kappah, enter this code on the character select screen. In Arcade Mode, put the cursor on Gore, press and hold Select, move the cursor left to Hayato, press □□ΔΔXOXOΔΔΔΔ+X. In order for this code to work, you must have already entered the bilstein code.

PLAY AS BLOOD: Enter this code on the character select screen. In Arcade Mode, put the cursor on Hayato, press and hold Select, move the cursor left to Bilstein, press XOXOXO then move right to Kappa, press ΔΔΔΔΔΔL1+R1. In order for this code to work, you must have already entered the Bilstein and Kappa codes.

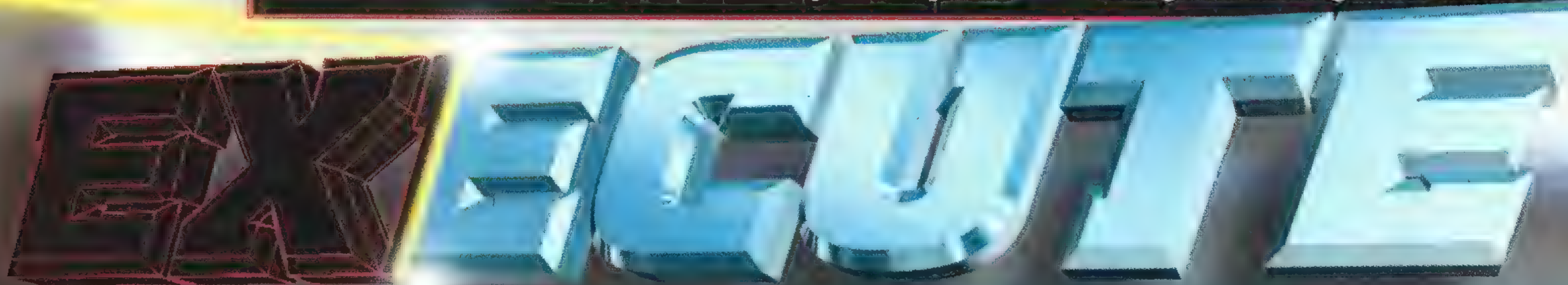
ZOOM CONTROL AFTER VICTORY: After winning a final round of any match, hold down 0+0. Once the view switches to the victory pose, press A to zoom in and B to zoom away. You can also use the D-pad to control the camera angle.

DARK FIGHTING: To fight in the dark, with only your weapons glowing, hold down L2+R2+↓ during the Vs screen.

WALL MODE: To get Wall mode, beat regular Bilstein. Now, go into the options menu and select "wall" on. Now characters will fly high into the air after being knocked up, and there are no more ring out victories.

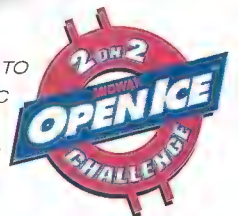
FIGHT AGAINST KAPPAH: In order to fight against Kappa, you must win the 3rd match of your game and the game timer's hundredth counter must be 00.

FIGHT AGAINST REAL BILSTEIN: To fight against Real Bilstein you must go through the entire game in under 6:00.





CONSIDER PARTICIPATING (WILLINGLY) IN THE PHENOMENAL HOME VERSION OF THE FIRST ARCADE VIDEO GAME EVER TO MAKE IT INTO THE HOCKEY HALL OF FAME, AND, IN TURN, BEING CHECKED, SLASHED, PITTED AGAINST THE MOST REALISTIC PLAYERS AROUND, SELECTING FROM OVER 20 POWER-UPS, INCLUDING SUPER GOALIE, BIG HEAD AND BABY SIZE MODES, BUILDING UP YOUR HOT METER AND LITERALLY SETTING THE NET ON FIRE AGAINST 1, 2 OR 3 OTHER PARTICIPANTS WHILE LEGENDARY BLACKHAWKS™ ANNOUNCER PAT FOLEY SCREAMS IN YOUR EAR. **THE ARCADE HIT HAS COME HOME.**



MIDWAY

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Perfect Weapon



MOVES AND COMBOS: Here's a list of the 29 moves and combos in this crazed fighting game.

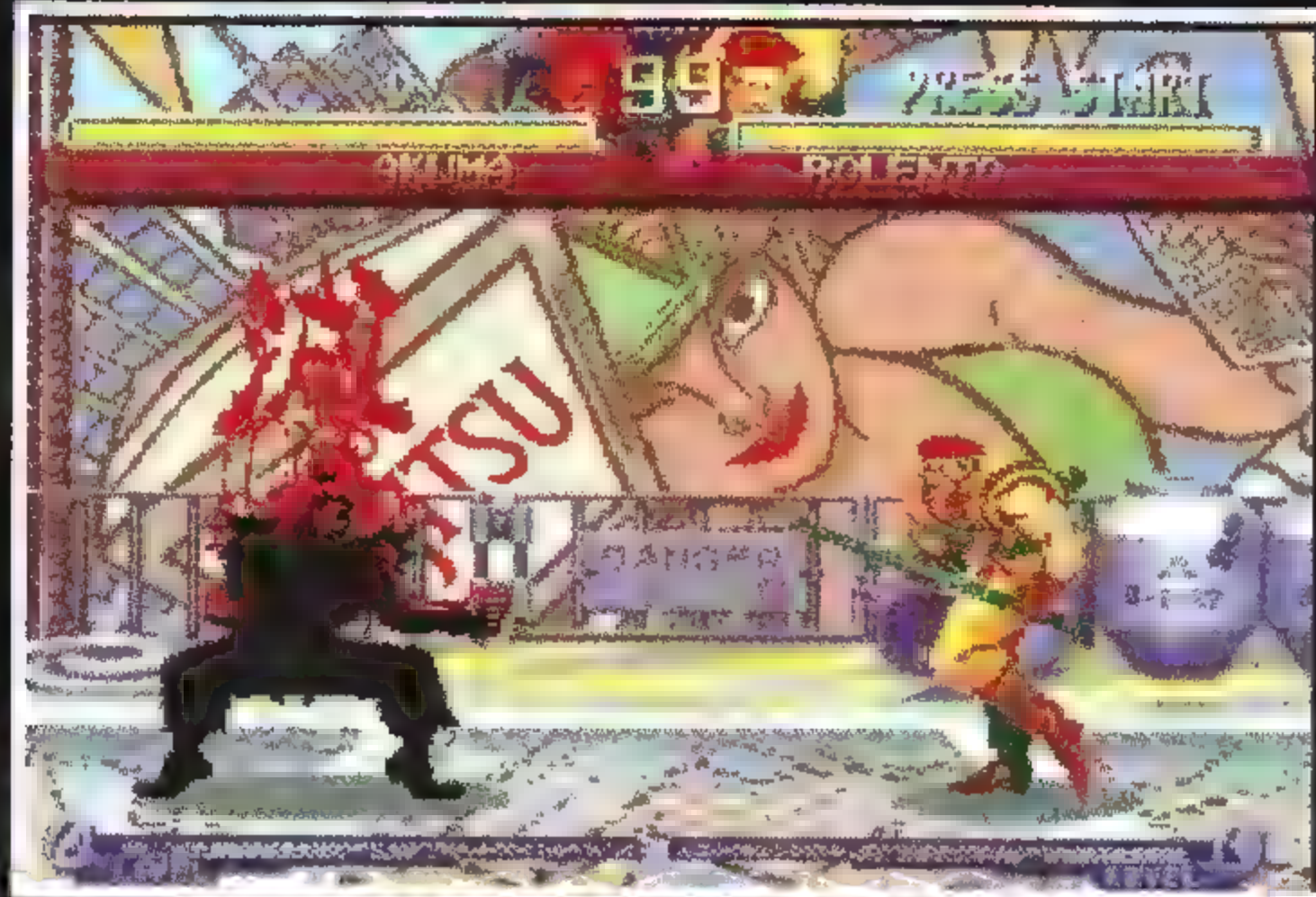
Up Kick Combo: ↓ + ○, ↓ + ○, ↓ + ○
Side Kick Combo: ○, ○, ○
Hook Kick Combo: ↑ + ○, ↑ + ○, ↓ + ○
Back Fist Combo: △, □, □
Spin Kick Combo: △, □, ×
Jab/Side Kick Combo: △, ○
Uppercut Combo: ↑ + □, ↑ + △, ↑ + □
Roundhouse Kick: ×, ○
Back Flip Kick: ↓, ↓
Back Punch: ↓ + △
Back Kick Combo 1: ↓ + ×, ×
Back Kick Combo 2: ↓ + ×, ↓ + ×
Spinning Punches: □ + △
Dash: ↑, ↑
Tackle: Dash, □ + ×
Punch to Head: Tackle, □ (punches thrown based on level)
Head Butt: Tackle, one or more Punches to Head, □ + △
Back Breaker: Tackle, one or more Punches to Head, □ + △ + × + ○ (restricted to high level)
Knee Grapple: △ + ○
Knee to Body: Knee Grapple, × (kicks thrown based on level)
Ghostbuster Throw: Knee Grapple, one or more Knees to Body, □ + △
Neck Breaker: Knee Grapple, one or more Knees to Body, □ + △ + × + ○
Grapple Throw: □ + ×
Kick to Head: Grapple Throw, × + ○
Crouch: L1
Leg Sweep: Crouch, × or ○
Palm Strike: Crouch, □ + △
Scissor Kick: Crouch, release L1, ×
Spinning Kick: Crouch, release L1, × + ○

PASSWORDS:

Ice World: ×, □, ×, □, □, ○, □, ○
Garden World: □, ×, ×, △, ○, ×, △
Forest World: ○, △, □, ○, □, △, △
Desert World: ○, ×, ×, ×, △, ○, △, △
Final World: ×, ×, □, ×, □, □, △, ○

(under 3:00 in a single round game). It's best to try single round matches, with the timer set to 20 seconds.
REAL ENDINGS: In order to see each character's Real Endings, you must first fight against Real Bilstein. Then, you must defeat him.

Street Fighter Alpha 2



ORIGINAL CHUN LI: Put the cursor on Chun Li, hold **Select** for more than 3 seconds, the press any of the buttons to choose her.

FIGHTING MID BOSSES: Don't lose a round, win more than five rounds with Super Combo or Custom finishes. After your fifth win, a new character will appear.

FIGHTING "SHIN" AKUMA: For Player 1, choose a character with a punch button, for Player 2, you must choose your character with a kick. You cannot lose a round or continue, and must finish with more than 3 Perfects. Shin Akuma will appear before the eighth match as the final boss. If you lose to him, he will not re-appear.

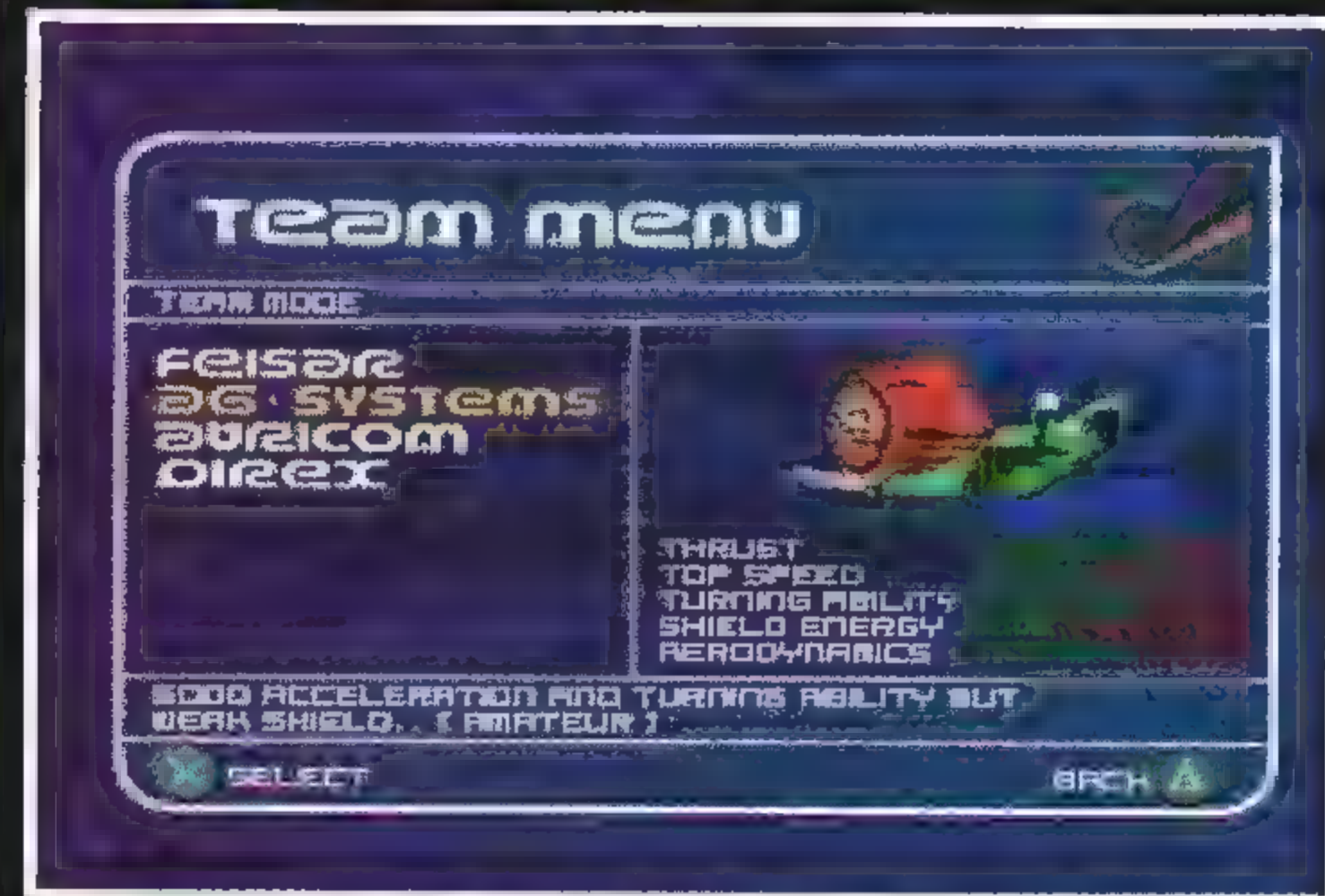
WINNING POSTURE SELECTION: After defeating an opponent, but before the KO symbol appears, press and hold **Select**, then one of the Punch or Kick buttons. Not all characters will have six win poses.

ZANGIEF APPEARANCE POSTURE: Hold **Select** before Zangief appears, and he will enter the fight with the cool cape animation.

PLAYING AS "SHIN" AKUMA: Turn off Shortcut, then put the cursor on Akuma, push and release **Select**, then move the cursor in the following order: Adon, Chun Li, Guy, Rolento, Sakura, Rose, Birdie, Akuma, Bison, Dan, Akuma (like a big "Z"). Once you're back on Akuma, press and hold **Select** again, then push a button. After doing this code once, you can easily select Shin Akuma by pressing and holding **Select**

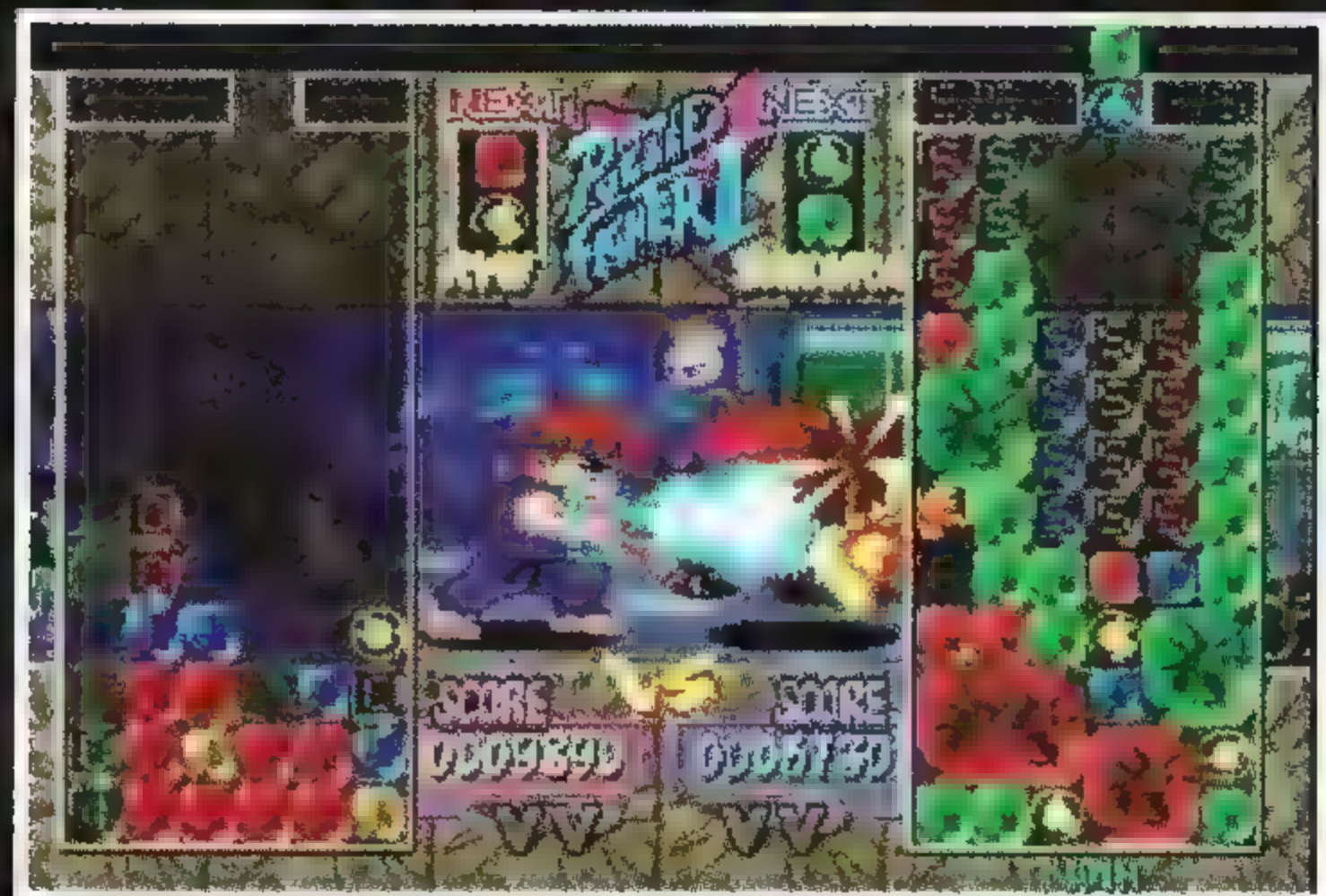
for 3 seconds while cursor is on Akuma. This code will also save onto your memory card.

Wipeout XL



PIRANHA TEAM: Go to the main menu. Hold **L1+R1+Select**, then hit **XXXXOΔ□**.
PHANTOM CLASS: Go to the main menu. Hold **L1+R1+Select**, then hit **ΔΔΔ○○○**.
EIGHT TRACKS: Go to the main menu. Hold **L1+R1+Select**, then hit **□□Δ□□**.
MINI GUN: During the game, pause, then hold **L1+R1+Select**, then hit **□□X□□XΔ**.
INFINITE ENERGY: During the game, pause, then hold **L1+R1+Select**, then hit **ΔX□□ΔX□□**.
INFINITE TIME: During the game, pause, then hold **L1+R1+Select**, then hit **Δ□□XΔ□□**.
INFINITE WEAPONS: During the game, pause, then hold **L1+R1+Select**, then hit **XXXX○○○○**.
SILLY SHIP MODE: Reset the PlayStation with **L1+R2+Select+Start** held down and keep holding until the copyright screen appears.
PASSWORDS:
Challenge I: **□□□Δ□Δ□□□□ΔX□**
Challenge II: **□□□Δ□ΔX□□XΔX□□**

Super Puzzle Fighter IIx



DIFFICULTY LEVEL: The EASY level is a three-match game for beginner; the NORMAL game is nine matches against the eight characters and the final boss.

Top 10 reasons
to play

Bulch

#1. Breaks New Ground For Aspiring Cross-Dressing Lunatics

#2 Never met a guy he didn't plug

#3 Lipstick color never
clashes with bloody carnage

#4 Can load an automatic and wax
his legs at the same time

#5 6" stiletto heels provide better
sniping angle

#6 Does the
tango better
than Rupaul

#7 Wears bullet-proof
panty hose

#8 "Gender-Defender" Uzi wipes
off that smirk real quick

#9 Didn't win the Miss America pageant
because "world genocide" didn't sit well
with the judges

#10 Stunt-doubles for Pamela

Sequel to the "Best
Action Game" of 1995

— Game Pro



• Throw a Party

12 gruesomely-detailed, blood-soaked worlds demanding non-stop violence and mental marauding. **NEW**

Play specialized psycho-killers equipped with personalized killing machines like the "Big Bang Stick" blue plasma laser and the "Superior Motha" rotary cannon. **NEW**

Blistering terrain morphing effects and enhanced environmental interaction with obstacles such as balconies, conveyor belts, and more. **NEW**

Thrashing soundtrack sends you into a homicidal rage. **NEW**



Also Available
For The PC



• Bring Your Mop



• Take A Stroll In The Park



RE LOADED

Bulch

www.interplay.com

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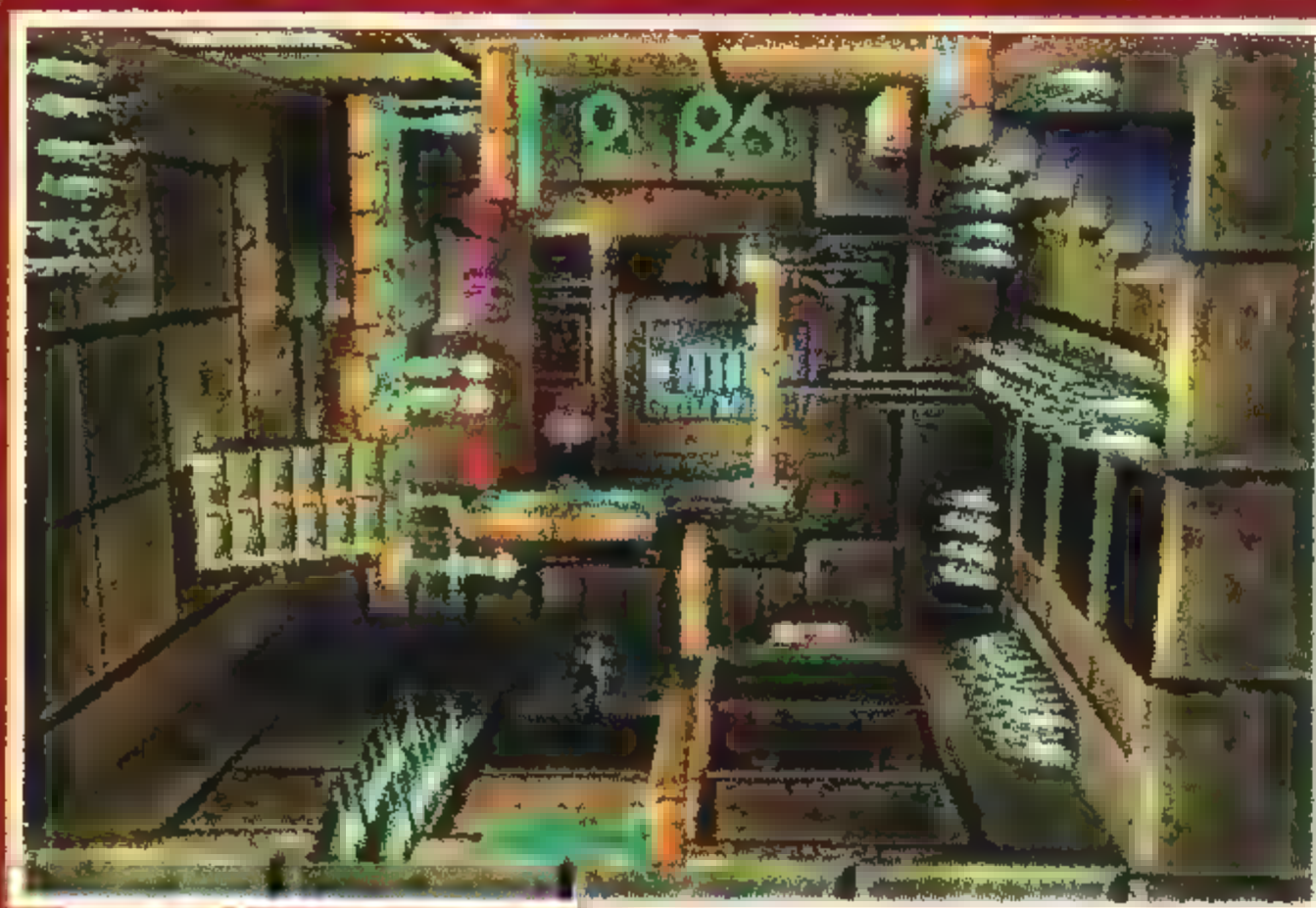
Crime: Fashion Victim Weapon: Gender Defender Special Weapon: Flaming Ring

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BY GAMERS. FOR GAMERS.

Blast Chamber



CHAMBER STRATEGIES

- **CUBICLES:** If you're outside the reactor area and someone else has the crystal, they have to go around the walls to reach the reactor. While they're going the long way, you can run behind the cubicle and use the hidden launcher to leap over the wall and land on it. Chuck your opponent and take the crystal. If you're outside the reactor and YOU have the crystal, use the cubicle as a blockade. If someone's coming at you from behind, run around the front. If they're coming at you from the front, run around to the back and use the launcher.
- **BLOW ME UP:** When your opponents go for the crystal, keep turning the fans on; it's almost impossible to grab the crystal when everyone's blowing through the air. If the crystal lands on the front surface of the cube that's not affected by the fans, grab it (if it's close) or run to the nearest kicker and spin the chamber.
- **REVOLUTION:** The 180-degree kickers are better than the 90-degree kickers; use them constantly to flip the chamber whenever your opponents go for the crystal. Collect all the H-Jump power-ups you can to bypass the launchers and jump directly onto the kicker boxes.
- **WIND OF DEATH:** It's easy to avoid being slammed into the ceiling spikes; just stay away from the middle of the fan belt. When you have to cross the fans, run along the front or back of the chamber, never the middle. If your opponents aren't wise enough to follow this strategy, push 'em onto the fans and watch 'em die.
- **RADIOACTIVE:** When you have the crystal, jump on the 180-degree kicker and don't move in the air. You land directly on the reactor platform. When your opponent has the crystal and is about to use the 180-degree kicker, hit the switch on the chamber floor to make him fall into the plasma stream. You can also use the Crystal Bomb whenever an opponent has the crystal and not spin the chamber until he blows up.
- **TENDERIZER:** Forget about the crystal. Jump over the spiked wall ("tenderizer"), run past the reactor, leap over the low wall, and wait next to the switch on the left side of the chamber. When someone gets the crystal, let him run for the reactor. As soon as he's between the tenderizer and the low wall next to you, hit the switch. The tenderizer slams shut and squashes the poor fool. Rotate the chamber and repeat the strategy. When you decide to score, grab the crystal, flip the switch to close the tenderizer, and run around behind it.

Akuma; the HARD game is the same as NORMAL, except the PlayStation opponents play faster.

ATTACKING: There are two ways to attack. The first is to drop a crash gem (the circular gem) onto a standard gem or crash gem of the same color; this destroys the gems and sends some counter gems (the gems with numbers in them) to your opponent's side. Dropping a crash gem on a counter gem of the same color won't destroy it until the counter gem reaches zero. You CAN destroy a counter gem while it's still counting, but only if an adjacent gem of the same color is destroyed. The second attack is with the diamond, which destroys all gems of the color it touches.

TAUNTING: Press the **SELECT** button during a match to taunt your opponent.

HIDDEN CHARACTERS: The coin-op version of Puzzle Fighter has three hidden characters: Akuma (the final boss), Dan (who's absolutely useless, because all his counter gems are red!), and Devilot, a vampiric creature from the Capcom game Cyberbots. It's not known yet how to reveal the hidden characters in the PlayStation version, but here's how to pry 'em out of the coin-op. Akuma: Highlight Ryu and hold Start, then press **↓, ←, ↓, ←, ↓, ←, ↓**, and hold **←**. While still holding **Start** and **←**, press an action button to select Akuma. (On the Player 2 side, highlight Ken and press **→** instead of **←**.) Dan: Highlight Ryu and hold **Start**, then press **↓** 14 times and press an action button to select him. (Highlight Ken on the Player 2 side.) Devilot: Take the same steps as Dan, but press an action button exactly as the timer hits ten seconds.

Beyond the Beyond



SECRET CHARACTERS: Many players who finished Beyond the Beyond noticed two spaces in the lineup of characters during the ending sequence, and suspected that there might be two secret characters in

the game. Well, they're abso-tootly right, and here's how to find them.

LORELEI: After you get the ancient tablet from Barbaros Castle, enter the right door (leading to the cleric). Walk forward to the stairs leading up and walk into the nearby walls to push a block and reveal a hidden passage. Take to the guard for a Bronze Key. Go down the stairs and open the door to meet Lorelei. Walk out to the king and enjoy the non-interactive scene, then leave the Castle and Lorelei joins your party.

PERCY: At the end of cave leading to Quamdar, Ramue sends the Black Knight to attack you. This is Percy, who's being controlled by the evil mask. Do NOT attack him; just wait for roughly 15 turns. The Black Knight runs away and cracks the mask; Percy joins your party.

Twisted Metal 2



HIDDEN CHARACTERS:

MINION: Go to the character select screen and leave the character on Roadkill. Next press **↓, ↑, ↓** then **←** and you should hear a bullet sound. You should now be able to select Minion. Now cycle through your characters and get that bad boy!

SWEET TOOTH: Go to the character select screen and leave the character on Roadkill. Next press **↑, ↓, ↑** then **→** and you should hear a bullet sound. You should now be able to select Sweet Tooth. Cycle through your characters to snag him!

SECRET MOVES: Twisted Metal 2 is chock full o' secret moves that can be turned into lethal combos. Experiment around to see what you can come up with.

JUMP: **↑, ↑, ←**

SHIELD: **↑, ↑, →**

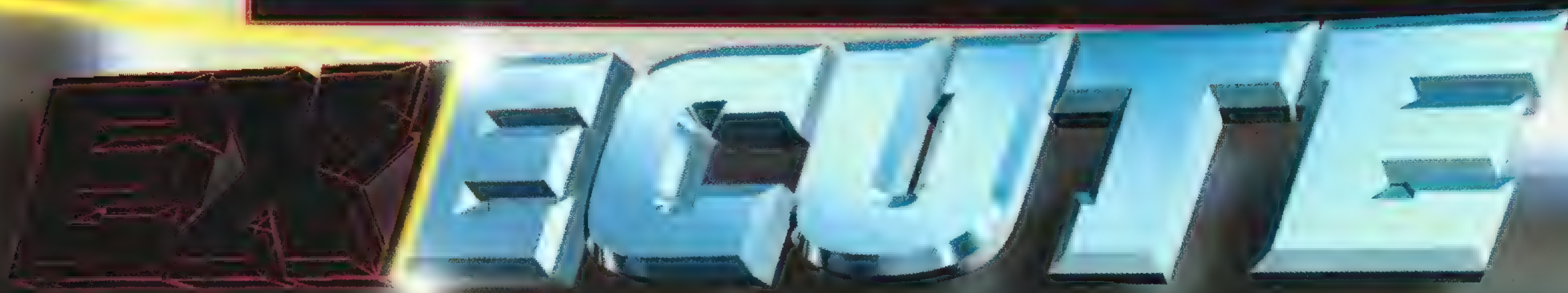
REAR FIRE SPECIAL WEAPON: **←, →, ↓**

DROP MINE: **→, ←, ↓**

FREEZE RAY: **←, →, ↑**

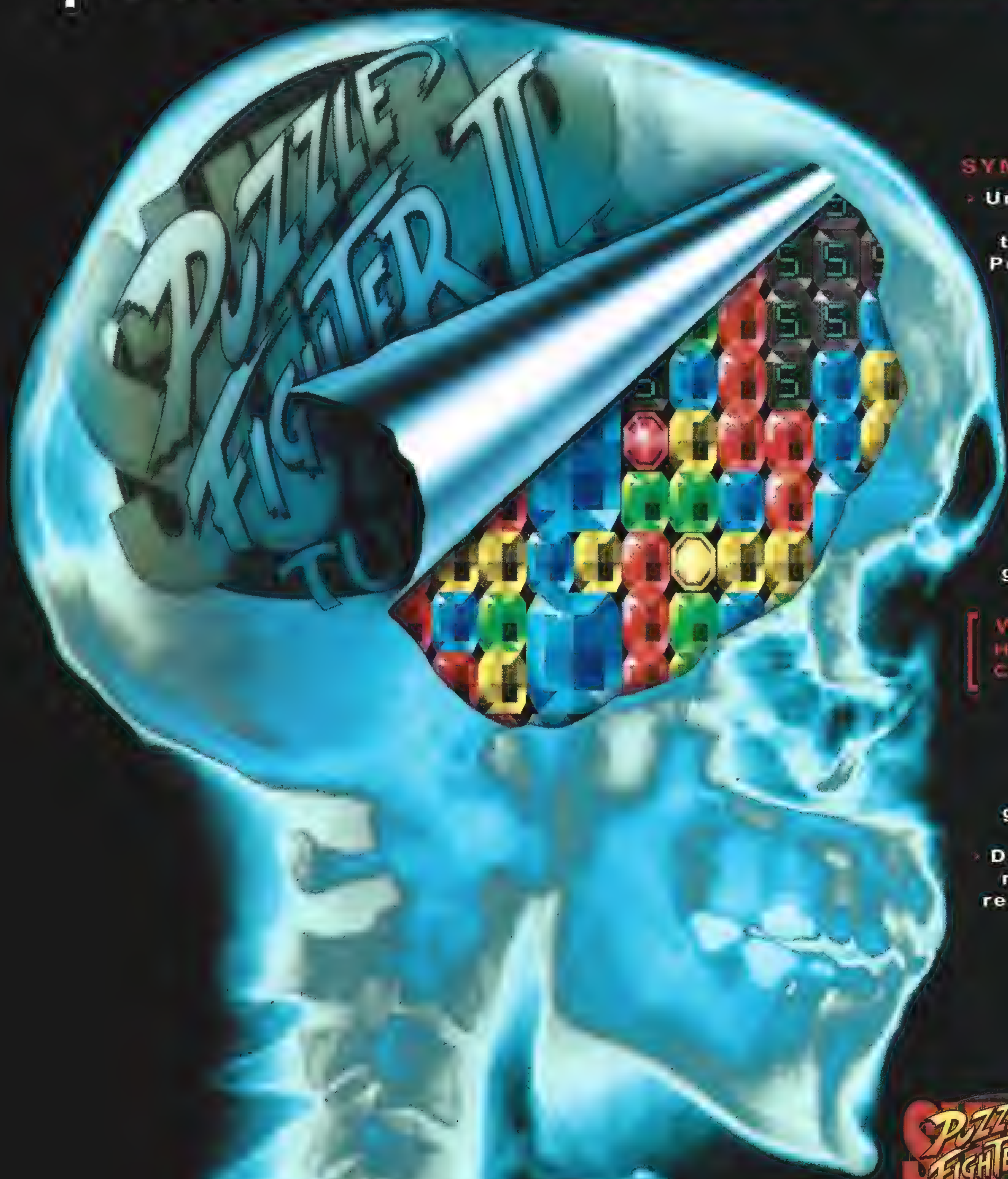
NAPALM: **→, ←, ↑**

MINION'S SPECIAL: **↑, ↑, ↓, ↑**, then **R2**



[DIAGNOSIS]

[MIND BLOCK]



SYMPTOMS :

- > Uncontrollable compulsion to play Super Puzzle Fighter
- > Obsession with color patterns and falling gems
- > Victory induced Euphoria
- > Extreme competitive tendencies: gloating, etc.

[WARNING : HIGHLY CONTAGIOUS]

Rx :

- > Continue regimen of frequent game playing
- > Defeat friends repeatedly to relieve anxiety

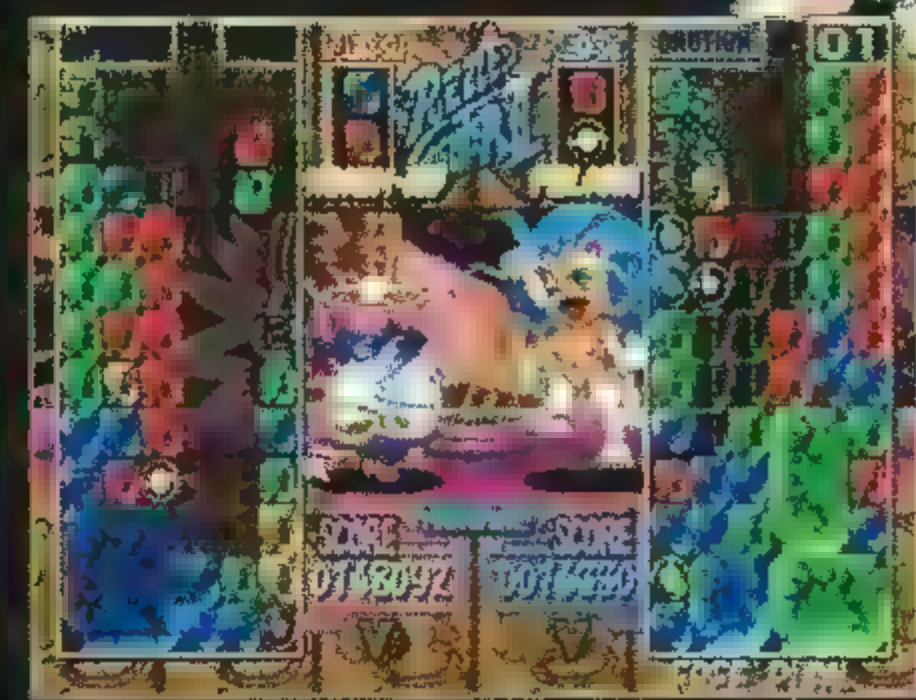


"Feroceously competitive, unfairly addicting... a fantastic puzzle game... you just won't be able to stop."

★★★★

NEXT GENERATION

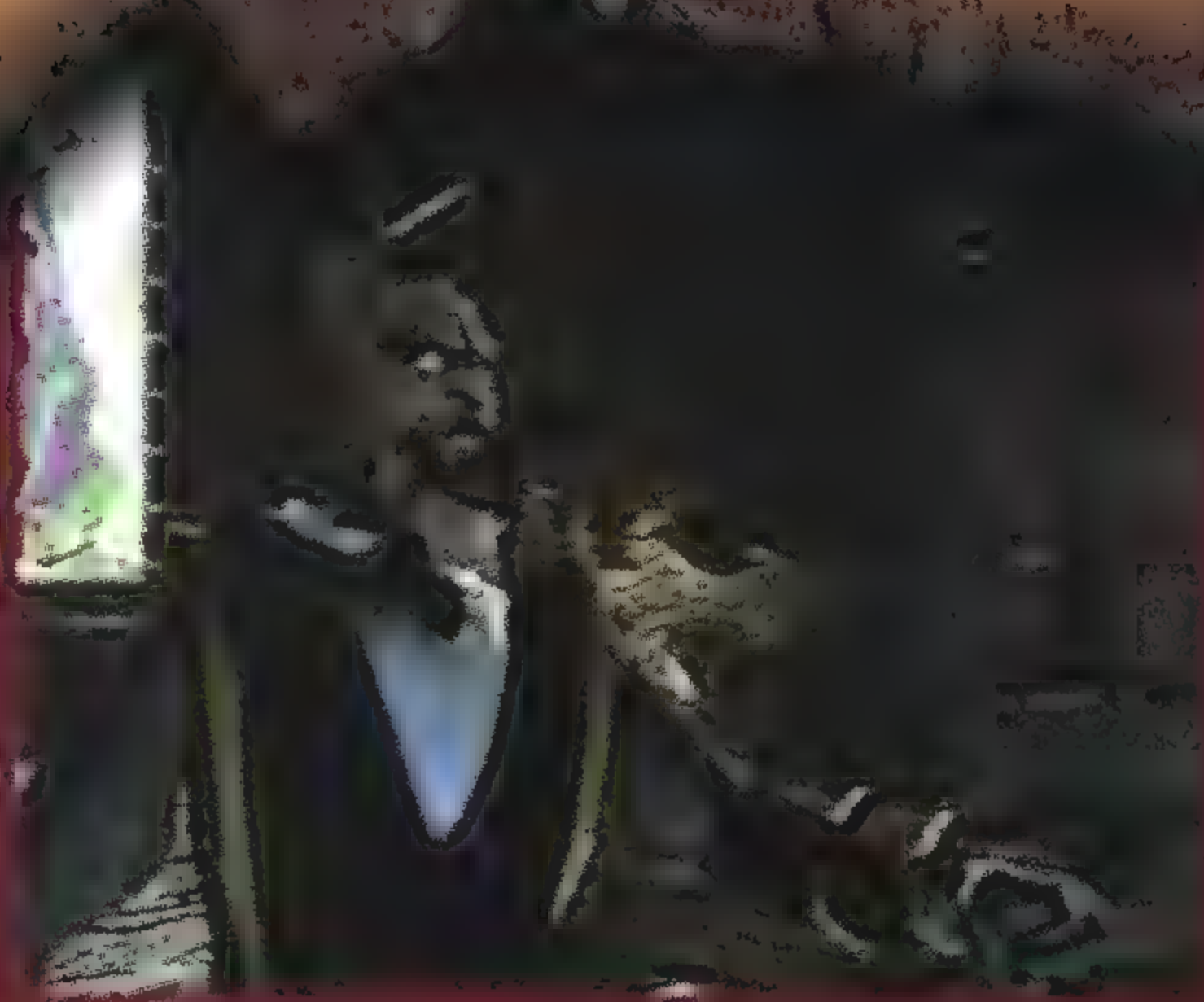
Oct. '96



CAPCOM

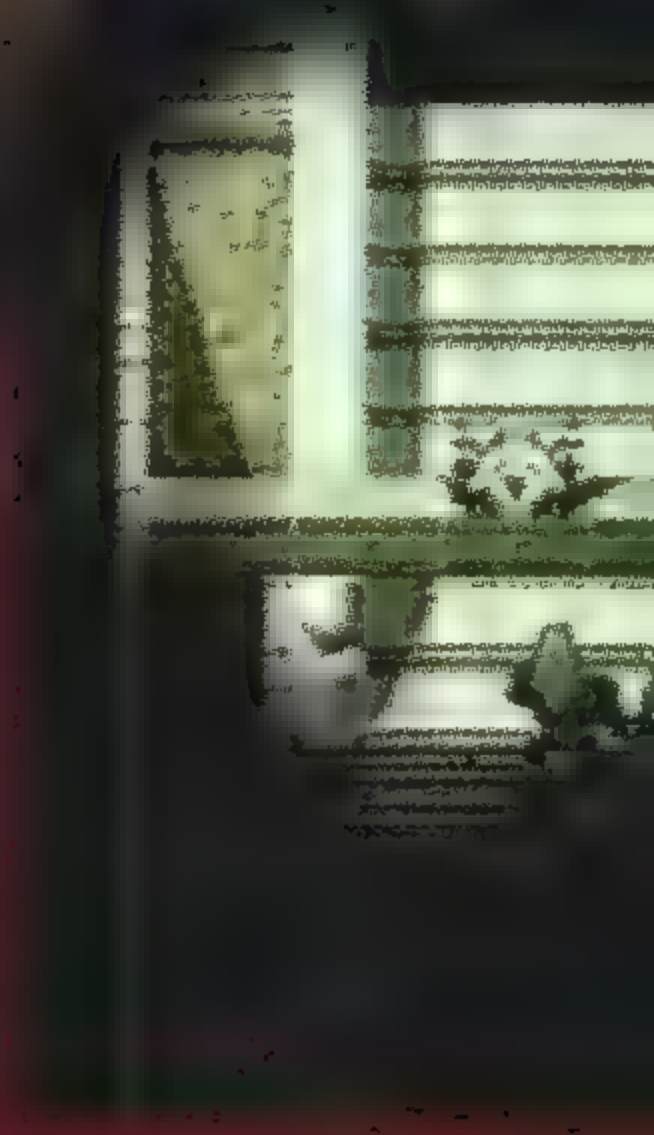
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Brimming with 170 horrifying enemies and 21 demented spells — each with a unique bloody graphic.



Forever — a black and dreadful place...

Where the undead feast on the living to survive.

ETERNAL DAMNATION LEAVES PLENTY OF TIME TO PLAN YOUR REVENGE

Welcome to Blood Omen: Legacy of Kain™.

Whether you choose the form of vampire, wolf,
bat, or mist, the search for and annihilation of
those who damned you is your only purpose.

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it alone in the dark."

—PSX

"...this is the largest game
world I've ever seen in an
adventure console game."

—PSExtreme

"The most ambitious adventure
game ever created awaits."

—GameFan

VAMPIRE BLOODFEST

Drink the blood of your
victims, then morph into one
of four sinister forms to escape
— vampire, wolf, bat or mist.



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CRYSTAL
DYNAMICS™



ACTIVISION®

GAME SHARK

Codez

Welcome to the Game Shark section. Each month we'll list the newest and coolest codes right here for your cheat'n pleasure. Be warned: These codes won't work if you don't own a Game Shark, so don't be calling us and complaining that they don't work when you try to enter them in your password screen!!

CRASH BANDICOOT

Set One

MASTER CODE.....D005C89C 0014
Select any stage.....30061948 0040
Infinite Lives.....80090248 0600
800902B4 0600
8009E538 0600

Set Two

Reset to 99 lives at map.....800618EC 6300
Reset to 2nd mask at map.....800618F0 0200

DIE HARD TRILOGY

Die Hard

Infinite Lives.....801D0878 0002
Infinite Ammo.....801C9A92 000A
801C992A 000A
Infinite Explosive Grenades (*)..801C9A94 000A
801C992C 000A
Infinite Flash Grenades (*)..801C9A96 000A
801C992E 000A
Infinite Smoke Grenades (*)...801C9A98 000A
801C9930 000A

Die Harder

Infinite Lives (*).....800B4AB0 0005
Infinite Rockets (*).....800B4AC0 000F
Infinite Grenades (*).....800B4C50 000A
Auto-reload (*).....801F6DDA 000F

Die Hard with a Vengeance

Unlimited Turbo.....800B6FA8 0009
Unlimited Time (*).....801D73E0 7800
Unlimited Time (Alternate).....800B71F8 5638
801D313E 0A17
801D73E0 4840
Unlimited Time (Alternate 2)...800B74D0 FFEE
801D74E0 3200
801D73E0 4E40
Infinite Lives.....800B6D50 0005

Note: Only have the relevant set of codes enabled at any given time to avoid possible interference with the other sub-games.

*1: Grenades are incorrectly labeled in the manual. They should be labeled like so: circular = explosive, soda can = smoke, hockey puck = flash.

*2: To use the Die Harder codes, you must start the game from the Game Shark menus, push the switch down before the Fox intro, and back up again after this to avoid the game crashing.

*3: The 3 in this code (6th digit) is for level one. Change this to a 4 for level two, a 5 for level three, and so on.

HIDDEN TWO PLAYER TRACKS: There are three known secret two-player tracks available.

JET MOTO BACKGROUND: At the 2-player track select screen: ↑, ↓, → then R1

ROOFTOPS: At the 2-player track select screen: ↑, ←, R1 then ↓

L.A. FROM ORIGINAL: ↓, ↑, □ then R2

LEVEL PASSWORDS:

MOSCOW: O, Δ, X, X, Δ, Space

PARIS: Space, Δ, R1, R2, X

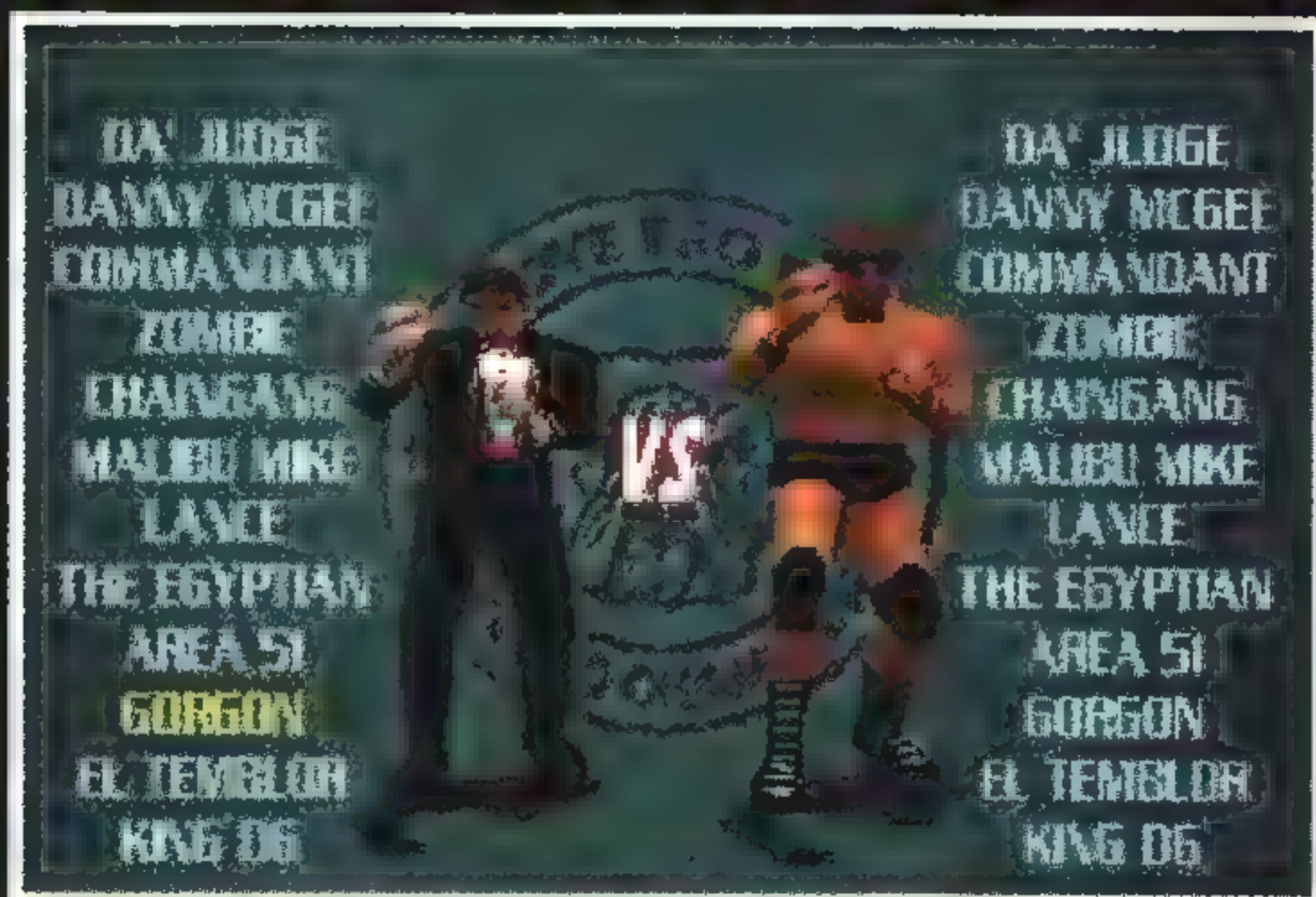
AMAZON: O, X, Δ, R1, Δ, X

Spot goes to Hollywood



CHEAT MENU: When you are on the TITLE SCREEN press the following sequence... Δ, ↑, →, ↓, ←, Δ, ←, ↓, →, ↑, Δ. This will activate the a COOL menu on the title screen. Select this menu option with the X button and then you can OPEN ALL LEVELS which allows you play any level of the game, in any order. When this has been activated, on the level select screen, if you hold down □ and press Start, you can see all the flics in the game except the "Making of". Also when the COOL menu has been activated, when you pause the game while playing and then hit □ you will get 50 Lives!

Power Move Pro Wrestling



SECRET CHARACTER CODES:

(Done at the title Screen)

TO GET SPARROW: O, →, Δ, ↑, □, ←, X

↓, X, ↓, □, ←, Δ, ↑, O, → then Select. (You should hear the clang of the bell and the crowd cheer if these are done right) Next go to the character select screen.

Go to the 3rd guy down from top on the character select screen (Comandant) and push Select.

TO GET GORGON (THE ANNOUNCER): L1, D1, L2, R2, R2, R1, Δ, ↓, X, ↑ and Select.

Go to 10th man from the top (Orange) and push Select.

TO GET SALLIE (THE REFEREE): ↑, ↓, ←, →, Δ, X, □, O, L1, R1, L2, R2 and Select.

Go to 11th guy (El Temblor) and push Select.

Robotron X



While playing, you can enter codes to cause power-ups to appear. Each code will only work five times per level.

TWO-WAY: ↑, Fire Up, ↑, Fire Up.

SPEED UP: ←, ←, →, →, Fire Up.

THREE WAY: →, →, Fire Left, Fire Down

FLAME THROW: ↓, →, ↓, →, Fire Right

FOUR-WAY: ↓, ↓, ↑, Fire Right

WAVE: ↑, Fire Right, ↓, →, Fire Left

SHIELD: ↓, ←, Fire Left, Fire Right

TIPS: Grab the humans in this order: Mom, Dad, then Mikey. Every human you grab after that will be worth double points.

After grabbing any human, start shooting the hulks, they're now worth points, until you get your next free life.

Try wiggling the joystick quickly in different levels and wonderful things will happen more often.

Send all code submissions to:

EXECUTE

Dimension Publishing

1175 Chess Drive, Suite E

Foster City, CA 94404

or email us at: d3@quake.net

EXECUTE

IMAGE ENHANCE

SCAN 132

THERMAL READING 200
ENDOCRINE ANALYSIS 100 SE
SECTOR COORDINATES 000000
CHOC COUNT 0050
ALIEN HOSTILES 0050
ALIEN MANDARIN 0000
SURVIVAL PROBABILITY UNKNOWN

3-001-A

PRIORITY RELEASE FLASH:

RE: HOSTILE ALIEN OUTBREAK AT AREA 51.

SITUATION HAS ESCALATED DANGEROUSLY. POSSIBLE ALIEN
OUTBREAK IMMINENT. UPGRADE STATUS TO CONDITION CRITICAL.
BE ADVISED, COMMAND HQ HAS AUTHORIZED THE RELEASE
OF THE FOLLOWING ASSAULT CLASS WEAPONS FROM SECTION K:
THE SEGA STUNNER FOR THE SEGA SATURN, THE KONAMI
JUSTIFIER AND THE A51 PATRIOT FROM INTERACT FOR PSX.

WARNING: UNAUTHORIZED USAGE IS FORBIDDEN UNDER ARTICLE
33-B OF THE SECRET WEAPONS ACT.

TRUST NO ONE.

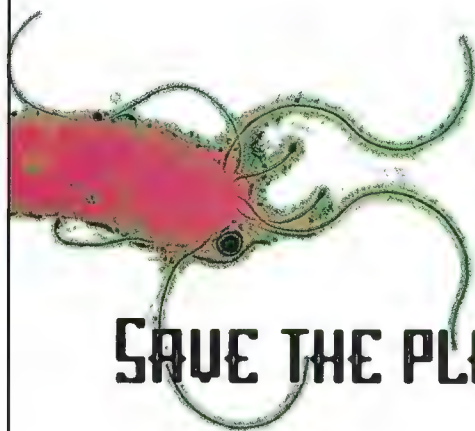
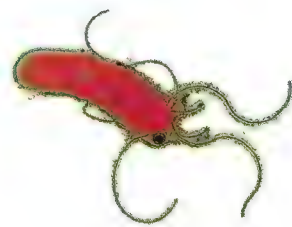
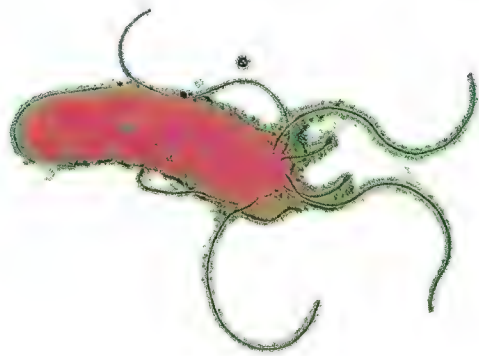
THE #1 ARCADE GAME SHOWS YOU WHAT YOUR GOVERNMENT WON'T.

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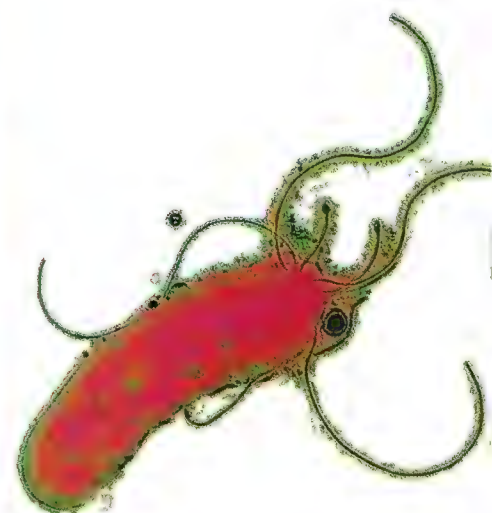
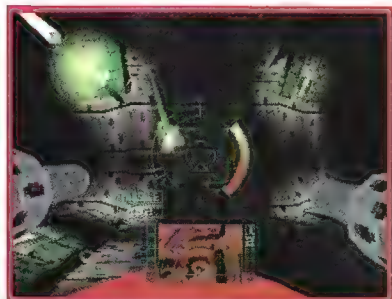
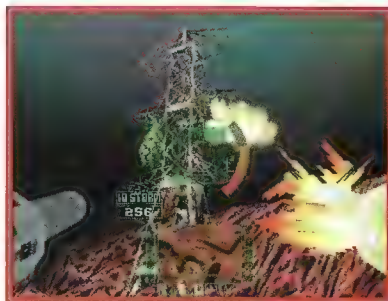


MIDWAY

THE SECRET'S OUT.

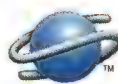


SAVE THE PLANET FROM A DEADLY VIRUS WITH



EIDOS
INTERACTIVE

CORE
DESIGN INC.



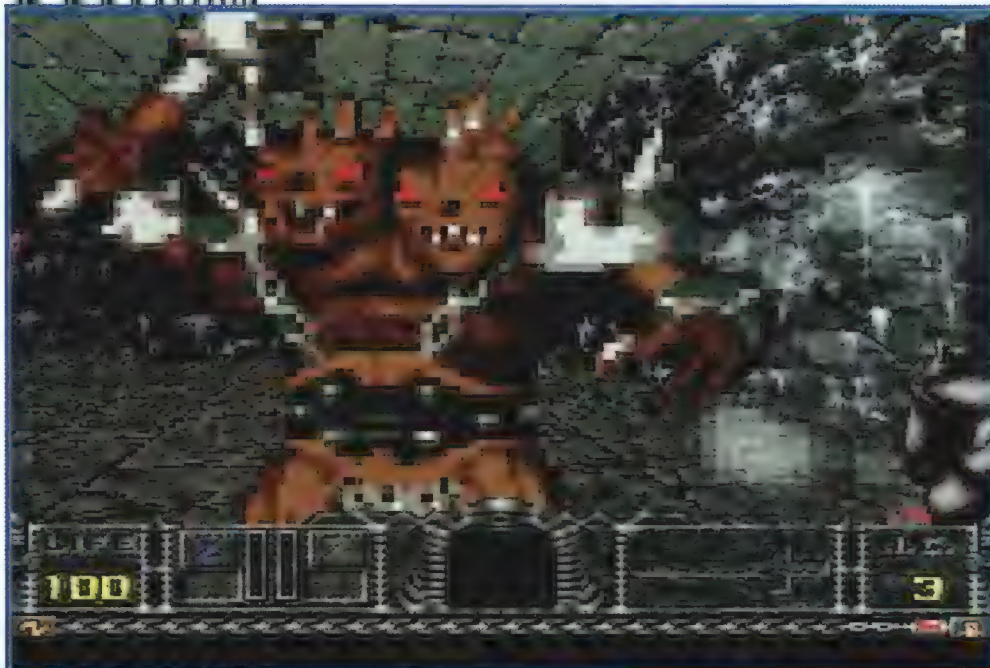


OUT LEAVING THE COMFORT OF YOUR BOMB.



Hold on tight, this ain't no joyride. It's up to you to wipe the life-mutating Machine Head virus off the face of this zombie-infested planet. Equipped with a bombful of futuristic weapons, you have exactly fifteen missions to annihilate each and every one of the putrefied mutants. And then face the viral villain himself in the mother of all showdowns. So don't just sit there. Your bomb is waiting.

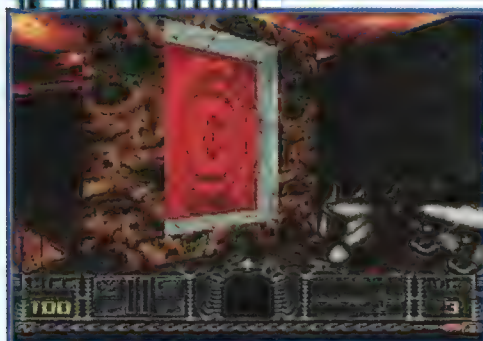
**MACHINE
HEAD**



HEXEN

GT INTERACTIVE • AVAILABLE DECEMBER

Hexen: Beyond Heretic is the sequel to the popular PC title Heretic, which was the first 3rd party game to make use of id Software's "Doom" engine. It differed from Doom by using a decidedly more medieval atmosphere and by incorporating items, power-ups and magic which could be used to fly, power-up your weapons, turn enemies into chickens, etc. Hexen, as the full name implies, takes you, the gamer, beyond Heretic and promises to push the limits of the PlayStation to the edge with plenty of new features not found in similar titles. In this 3D shooter, you have the choice between three different classes of characters: Fighter, Cleric or Mage — all with different weapons and skills. In addition, you now can move freely from one level to the next through portals. In fact, in many cases, you have to warp to the next level, flip a switch or find an object, then go back to the previous level. Hexen also showcases many new special effects, such as shattering stained glass and warping walkways. We'll follow up with the complete review in next month's issue.



EXPECTING

SAY NO TO DRUGS.
SAY YES TO BLOODSHED AND HELICOPTER WARFARE.



HERE'S YOUR CHANCE TO GREASE THE LOW-LIFE SCUMBAGS OF THE TERRORIST UNDERWORLD.

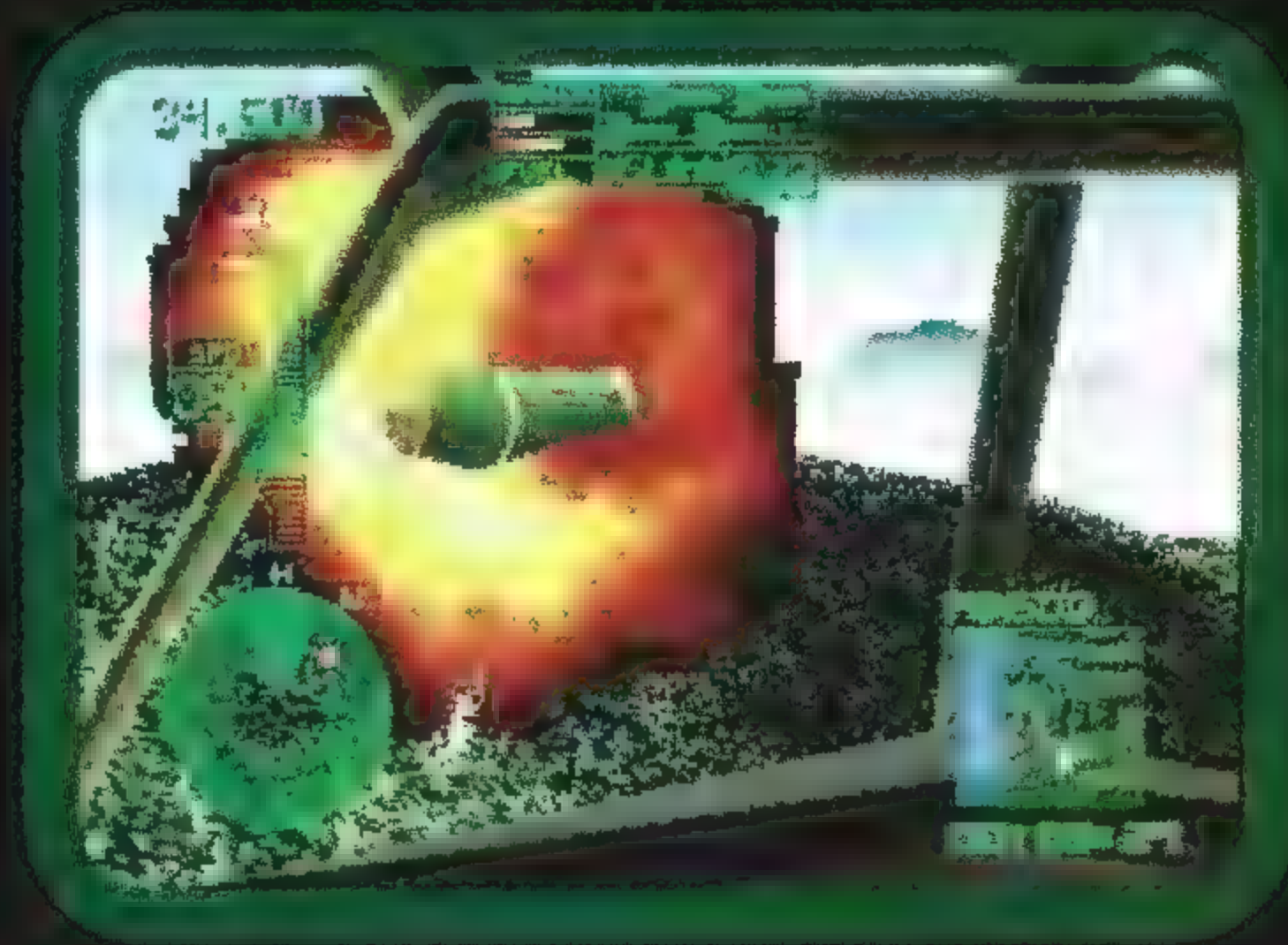
STRAPPED INTO YOUR CHOPPER, YOU'LL BE FLYING 32 HIGH-RISK COMBAT MISSIONS OVER 7 ENEMY-INFESTED TERRAINS, SEARCHING FOR AND RESCUING INNOCENT HOSTAGES, WREAKING HAVOC ON THEIR CAPTORS.

FEATURES INCLUDE REAL-TIME 30 FPS 3-D GRAPHICS WITH WICKED 3-D EXPLOSIONS, ADVANCED ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AN ENEMY ADVANTAGE), 2 SWITCHABLE FLIGHT MODES THAT LET YOU CONTROL YOUR ALTITUDE AND ANGLE OF ATTACK AND A GUN-BLAZING WINGMAN TO COVER YOUR BUTT.

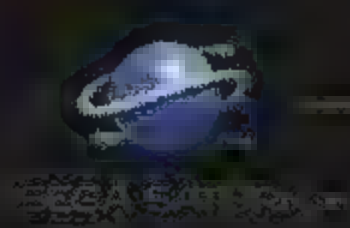
BLACK DAWN, ARCADE COMBAT SO EXTREME, YOU'LL NEVER GO BACK TO ORDINARY CARNAGE.



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BLACK DAWN





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**FULL SEASON AND
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SUBSTITUTIONS

PUMP FAKES

FOULS

CREATE YOUR OWN PLAYER

NO TRADING LIMITS

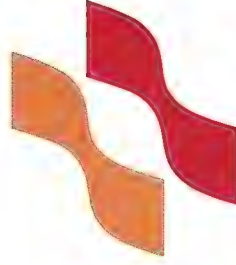


"NBA IN THE ZONE 2"

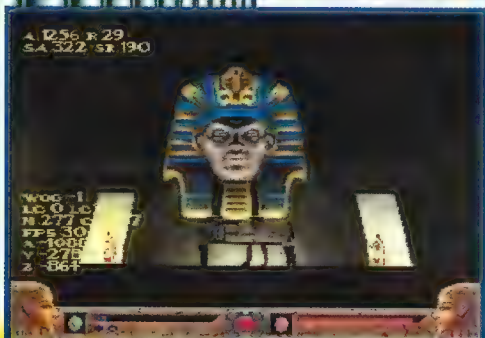
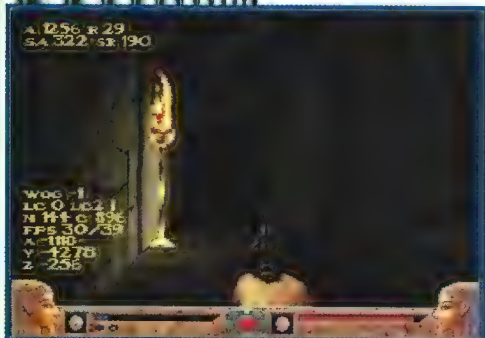
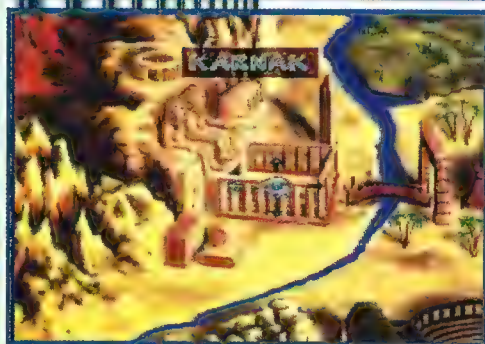
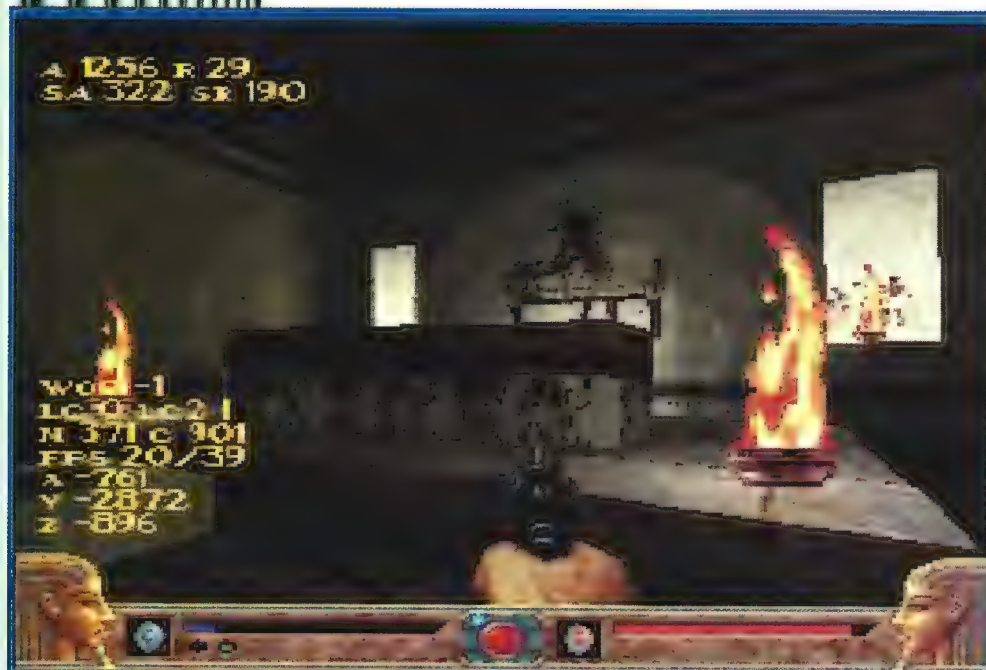
ALL 29 NBA TEAMS

**INTUITIVE CROWD
REACTIONS**

POST PLAYS



KONAMI®



POWERSLAVE

PLAYMATES • AVAILABLE DECEMBER

Judging from our first glance, Playmates Interactive's Powerslave puts most of the other 3D corridor shooters to shame. Developer, Lobotomy Software, has put together one of, if not THE, fastest 3D engines around. This shooter takes place in an ancient Egyptian city which has been seized by dark, mysterious powers. Many armed forces from all over the world have entered the city and attempted to rid it of this evil, but none have ever returned... You're the last resort and it's going to take more than wits alone. Thankfully, on your quest you'll find plenty of weapons to make your task a little bit easier such as: hand grenades, a flame thrower, an M60 machine gun, and a magical Cobra Staff. In addition, Powerslave packs some nifty features including: first and third person viewpoints, advanced 3D lighting effects, 20-plus levels of gameplay, the ability to look up and down, jump, crawl and swim, and a musical soundtrack from, none other than the "Yani" of video game music himself, Tommy Tallarico. We will have the review next issue.

EXPECTING

Proof That Demons Do Exist

In the near future, mankind has conquered dimensional travel but the door we have opened swings both ways. The peaceful city you have grown up in has become a haven for dark creatures from another world— Demons! Now it's up to you and your friends to harness the hidden power within you by entering the fantasy game known as Persona.

You awaken with incredible abilities that you will need to defeat the scores of Demon invaders and cleanse the land of their forces. Converse with them before doing battle to determine your best course of action. Fight them or enlist their aid in your mission. Either way, you are set for the fantasy adventure of a lifetime!

Special Features

- Based on the ultra-popular, mega-hit, Megami Tensei series: first time to hit US shores
- 100+ hours of pulse pounding gameplay
- Over 300 different monsters to do battle with
- Morph any member of your party into a more powerful source known as "Persona"
- Fight your way to one of many endings

Persona



Use your "Persona"



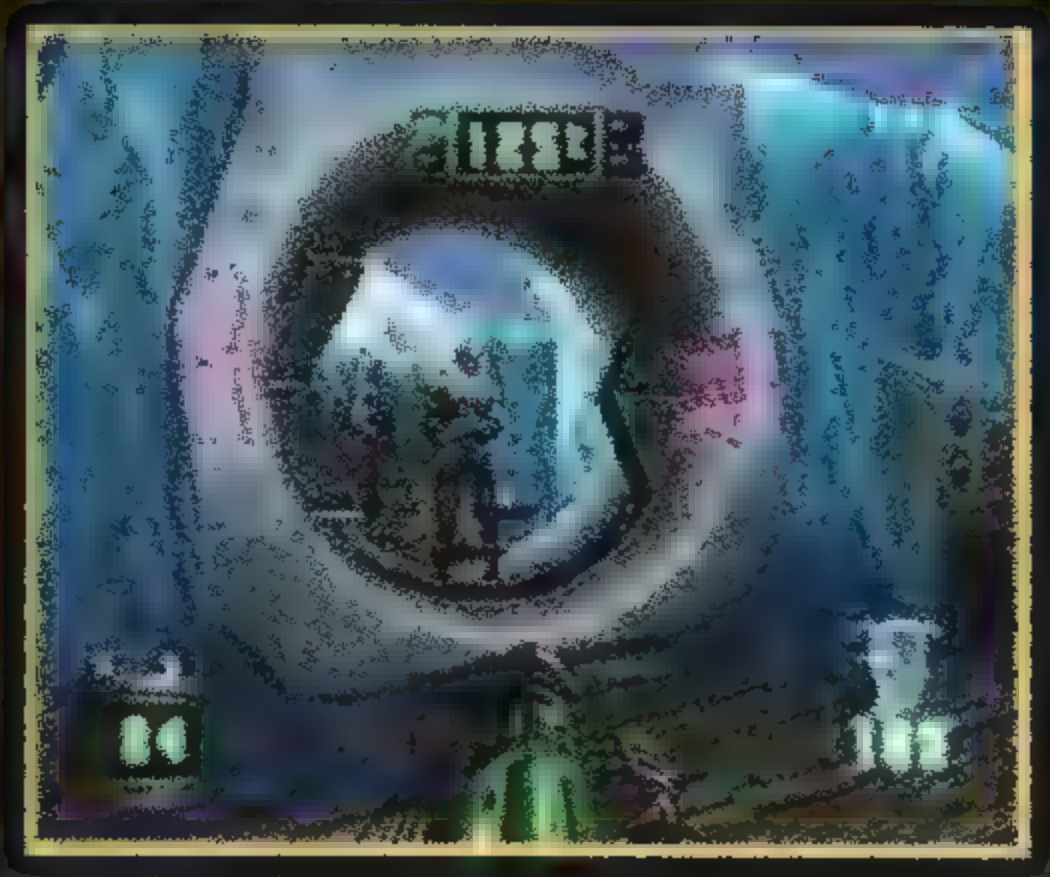
NOW RECRUITING

For The LightStormer Corps



This is your chance to proudly wear the LightStormer uniform. We'll send you to the far corners of the solar system with enough firepower to enforce our hard-won peace. You'll be mastering awesome weapons like the Phase Rifle, Anti-Matter Blaster, Lock-on Cannon and Plasma Lance as well as receiving psionic neural implants - the classified technology reserved solely for the LightStormer Corps. With this arsenal, you'll be able to pulverize United Earth's enemies not only with your physical weapons, but with your mind.

Travel To Exotic Places.



Meet Interesting Creatures...



And Kill Them.

DISRUPTOR



INSOMNIA

universal interactive studios



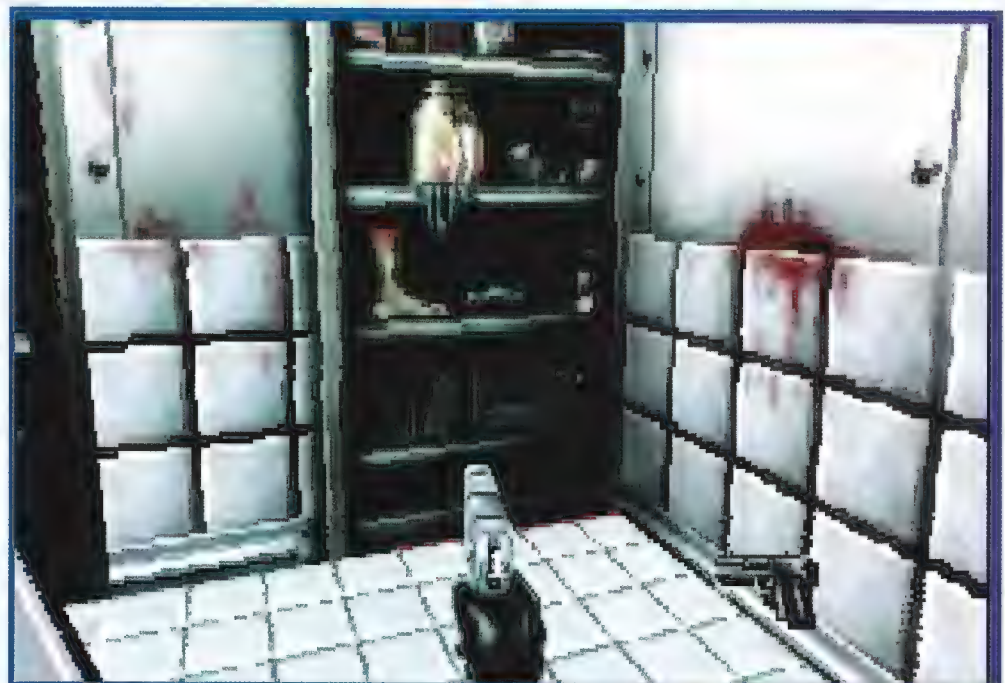
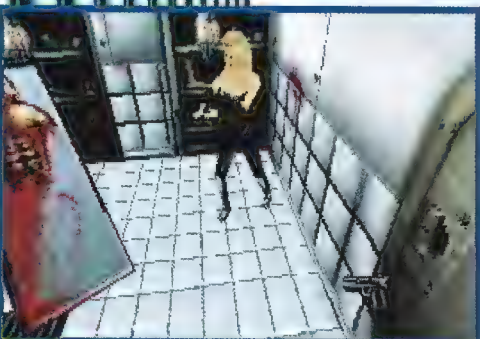
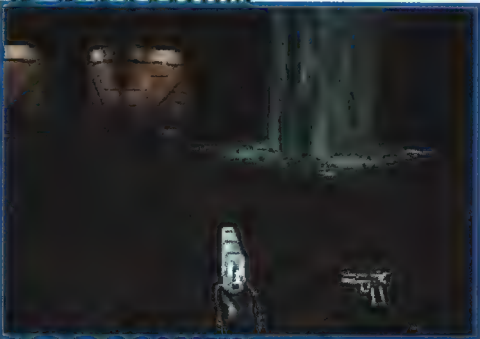
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BARB WIRE

GT INTERACTIVE • AVAILABLE FEBRUARY

This just in from the "huh?" news service: GT Interactive is producing Barb Wire for the PlayStation. Based on the Barb Wire movie (bomb — starring Boobala Anderson) and the popular comic book series, this 3D action game should make it to retail during the first quarter of 1997. The game incorporates motion-capture technology (the design team had the rough job of watching Boobala prance around in front of the green screen — showing off the twins) with a "state-of-the-art" 3D engine. Barb Wire features nine levels of gameplay based on the nine part comic book series and a two player "Adversary" mode, in addition to cinematic sequences that introduce each mission. We have yet to get hands-on time with Barb, but we expect to for the next issue. It needs to be said: this looks like it could be one of those classic "Acclaim-style" movie licenses that gives gamers the willies just thinking about it. Hopefully, GT Interactive will deliver a good game to go with Barb Wire's scenic mountain range.



EXPECTING

LARA invites you to enter

the TOMB RAIDER

contest

GRAND PRIZE

One Grand Prize
winner will receive

- Tomb Raider Backpack
- Tomb Raider T-shirt
- Copies of Machine Head, CrimeWave, and Incredible Hulk for the PSX or Saturn
- Tomb Raider Collectable Poster

FIRST PRIZE

Five First Prize
winners will receive

- Tomb Raider Backpack
- Copies of Machine Head, and Incredible Hulk for the PSX or Saturn
- Tomb Raider Collectable Poster

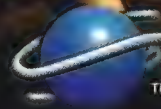
SECOND PRIZE

10 Second Prize

winners will receive

- Tomb Raider Collectable Poster

To enter, send a standard size postcard containing name, address, phone and e-mail address to "Tomb Raider Sweepstakes", 303 Sacramento Street, San Francisco, CA 94111



EIDOS
INTERACTIVE

EIDOS INTERACTIVE HINT LINE: 1-900-77-EIDOS

Cost of Call \$0.95/minute/Must be 18 years or have Parent's Permissio/Touch-Tone Phone Required

1. No purchase necessary. To enter, send a standard size postcard containing name, address, phone and e-mail address to "Tomb Raider Sweepstakes", 303 Sacramento Street, 3rd Floor, San Francisco, CA 94111. No purchase or other action necessary to enter. One entry per household. Mechanically reproduced entries will not be accepted. Entries must be received by January 31, 1997. Sweepstakes ends February 15, 1997. Sweepstakes is the exclusive property of Eidos Interactive and will not be acknowledged or returned. Only one prize per family, organization, or household.

2. Prizes: 1 Grand Prize: Grand Prize winner will receive a Tomb Raider Backpack, Tomb Raider T-shirt, copies of Machine Head, CrimeWave, and Incredible Hulk for the PSX or Saturn, and a collectable Tomb Raider poster. Grand Prize has an approximate retail value of \$140.00. 5 First Prize winners will receive a Tomb Raider Backpack, copies of Machine Head and Incredible Hulk for PSX or Saturn, and a Tomb Raider collectable poster. First Prize has an approximate retail value of \$140.00. 10 Second Prize winners will receive a Tomb Raider collectable poster. Second Prize has an approximate retail value of \$20.00. All prizes will be determined by a random drawing from all valid entries by Eidos Interactive whose decisions are final. Drawing will be held on or about February 15, 1997. Prizes will be awarded. Prize(s) are non-transferable. No substitutions are allowed, except at the option of Eidos Interactive should the featured prize(s) become unavailable. The odds of winning will be determined by number of valid entries received.

3. Eligibility: Sweepstakes open to residents of United States and Canada. No cash prize. No time parameters contained herein or return of any prize/prize notification as undeliverable will result in disqualification and an alternate winner will be selected. In the event of disqualification, Grand Prize, First Prizes and Second Prizes will be awarded to the next available entry. Runner up winners will be notified by mail. By acceptance, winner(s) agree to the use of their name and/or likeness for purposes of advertising, trade, or promotion without further compensation, unless prohibited by law. Eidos Interactive is not responsible for any damages, taxes, or expense that consumers might incur as a result of this contest or receipt of prize. Winners accepting prize(s) agree that all prize(s) are awarded on the condition that Eidos Interactive and its agents, representatives, and employees will have no liability whatsoever for any injuries, losses or damages of any kind resulting from acceptance, possession, or use of the prize(s).

4. List of winners: For a list of winners, send a self-addressed stamped envelope to Eidos Interactive Tomb Raider Sweepstakes, 303 Sacramento Street, 3rd Floor, San Francisco, CA 94111. Requests for winners must be received by February 15, 1997. Allow 4 weeks for delivery of winners list.

5. Restrictions: Void where prohibited or restricted by law. All federal, state and local regulations apply.

6. Sponsors: This sweepstakes is sponsored by Eidos Interactive and Dimension Publishing. Eidos Interactive, Core, Tomb Raider, Lara Croft and her likeness are trademarks of Eidos, Plc. ©1996 Eidos.

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"...stunning...original...
Bubsy 3D climbs back
to the top...check it
out!" ---ECM

BUBSY 3D

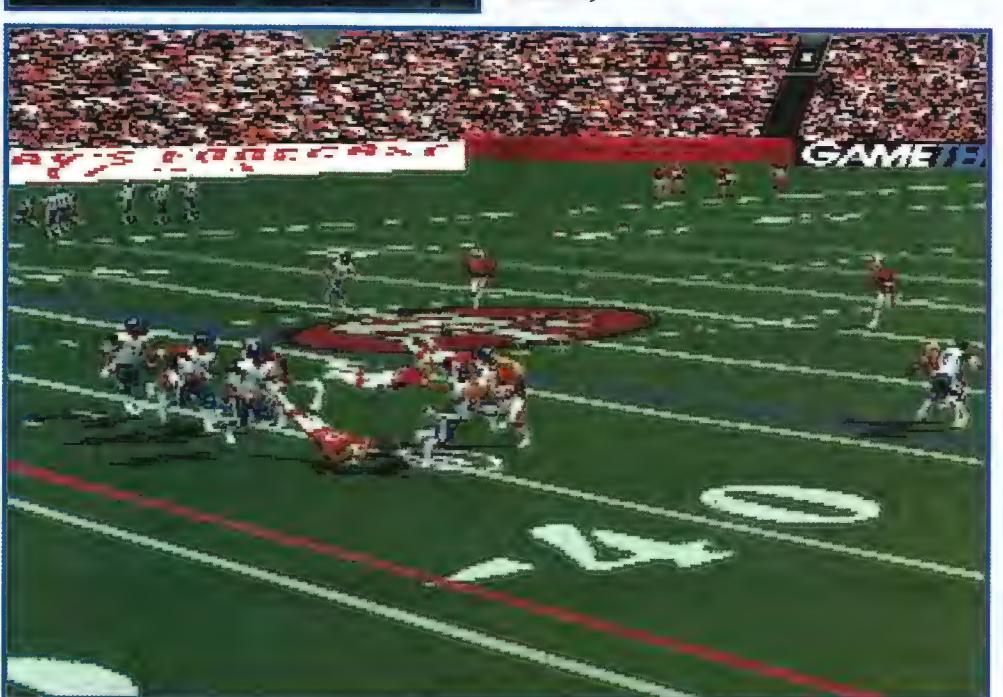
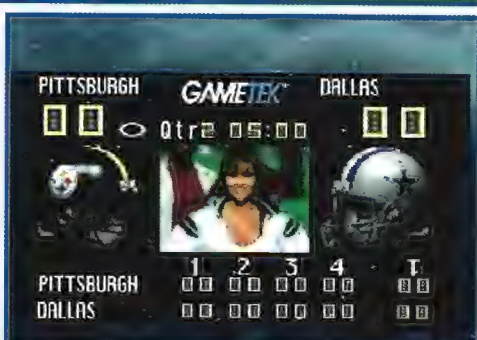
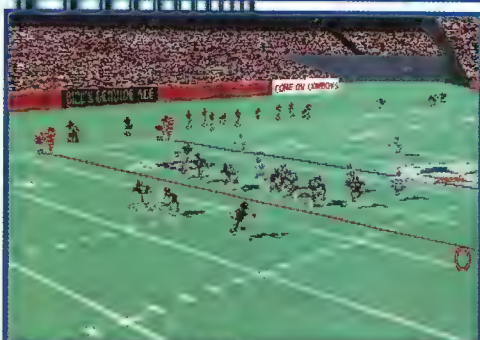




JIMMY JOHNSON FOOTBALL

KONAMI • AVAILABLE DECEMBER

Konami has a new football game coming out... no, not THAT one (if you've seen or played NFL Full Contact, stop crying for a moment and we'll let you know about their REAL football game), but Jimmy Johnson NFL Football '97. Jimmy's game is the real deal — with full season play, statistical tracking, multiple camera angles, instant replay, both an NFL and NFLPA license, variable playing conditions, multiple difficulty modes, a new passing and kicking meter system, multiple player modes, a practice mode and much, much more. The game began its life at Miami, Florida based Gametek (who have since stopped publishing and are focusing on product development) and was recently picked up by Konami for North American distribution. While we can't confirm that the game will come with any kind of hair spray promotion, one can still hope. Jimmy Johnson NFL Football '97 is scheduled for release in December, and we should have a review of the game in our February issue (this issue should also feature our GameDay '97 review, to finish off this year's football sweepstakes).



EXPECTING

TEST DRIVE: OFF ROAD

ACCOLADE • AVAILABLE FEBRUARY

We first previewed Accolade's new Test Drive offering: "Off Road" back in our October issue. At the time it was very early, but we felt it had the ingredients to become an instant classic. Well, we just got our first playable version of the game, so we thought we'd give you another look. As we reported in October, the new Test Drive is a go-anywhere off road racing game that features four of the most sought after 4x4 vehicles on the road today. In this latest build we were able to test most of the terrain and vehicles, and we're happy to report that the game is coming along veerrrry nicely. There will be twelve different tracks to



choose from, all containing varying environmental conditions. And for you party gamers out there, there is a two player mode and a link capability that can be used in all three different racing categorys. The game emphasizes driving physics and realistic crash and sound effects, so



you can pretty much expect a sim type environment. The soundtrack is provided by Gravity Kills, so you can expect some pretty cutting edge alternative music to race to. We're looking forward to this one, so stay tuned.



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SPECIFICATIONS

COMPATIBLE WITH ALL SONY PLAYSTATION GAMES

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- KONAMI'S CRYPT KILLER™
- DIE HARD TRILOGY™
- PROJECT HORNED OWL™
- AREA 51™

WEIGHT: 7 OUNCES

RANGE: 5-7 FEET

SIZE: 8 INCHES FROM NOSE TO BUTT

THE LICENSED GUN FOR THE SONY PLAYSTATION.

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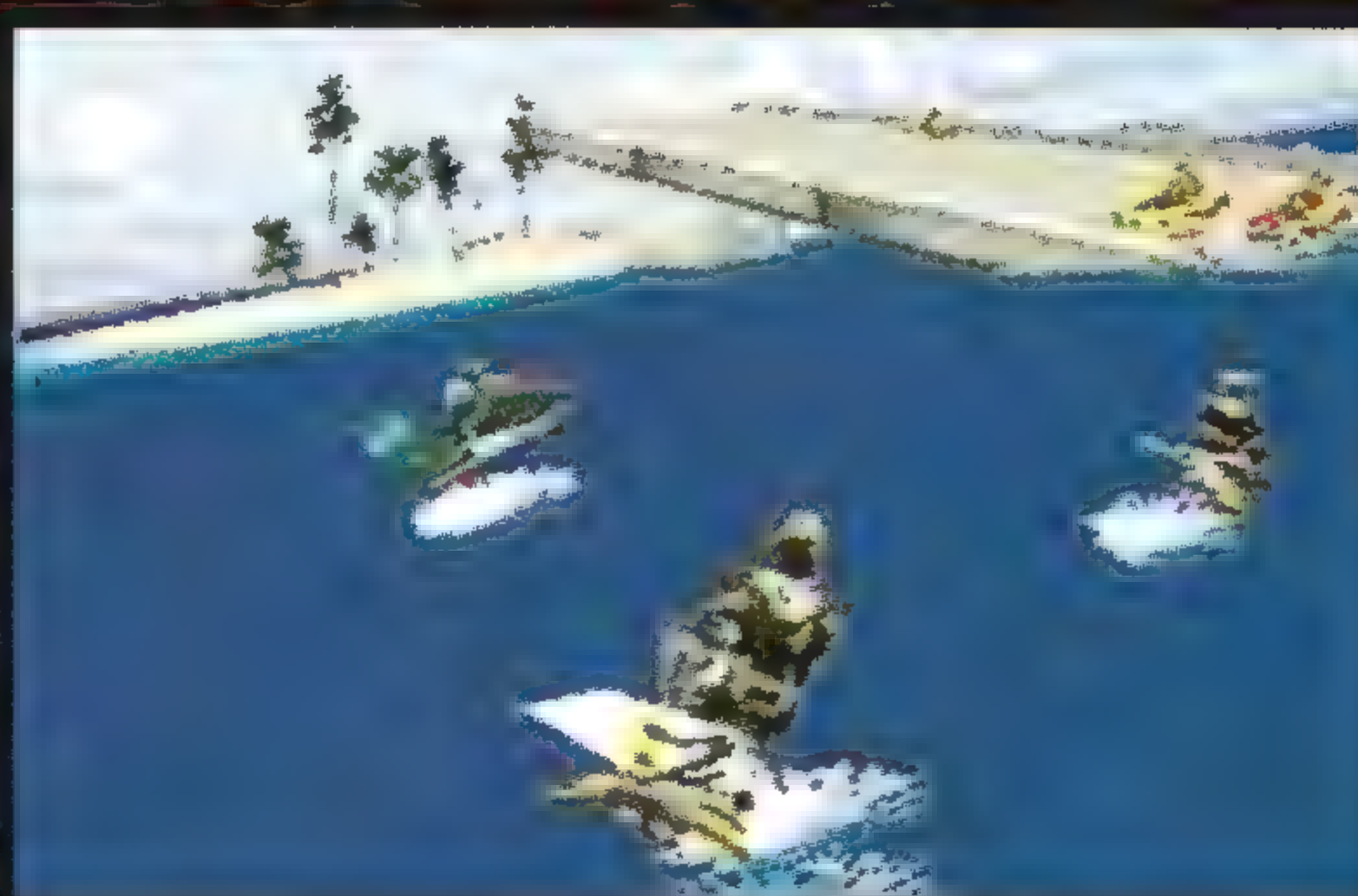
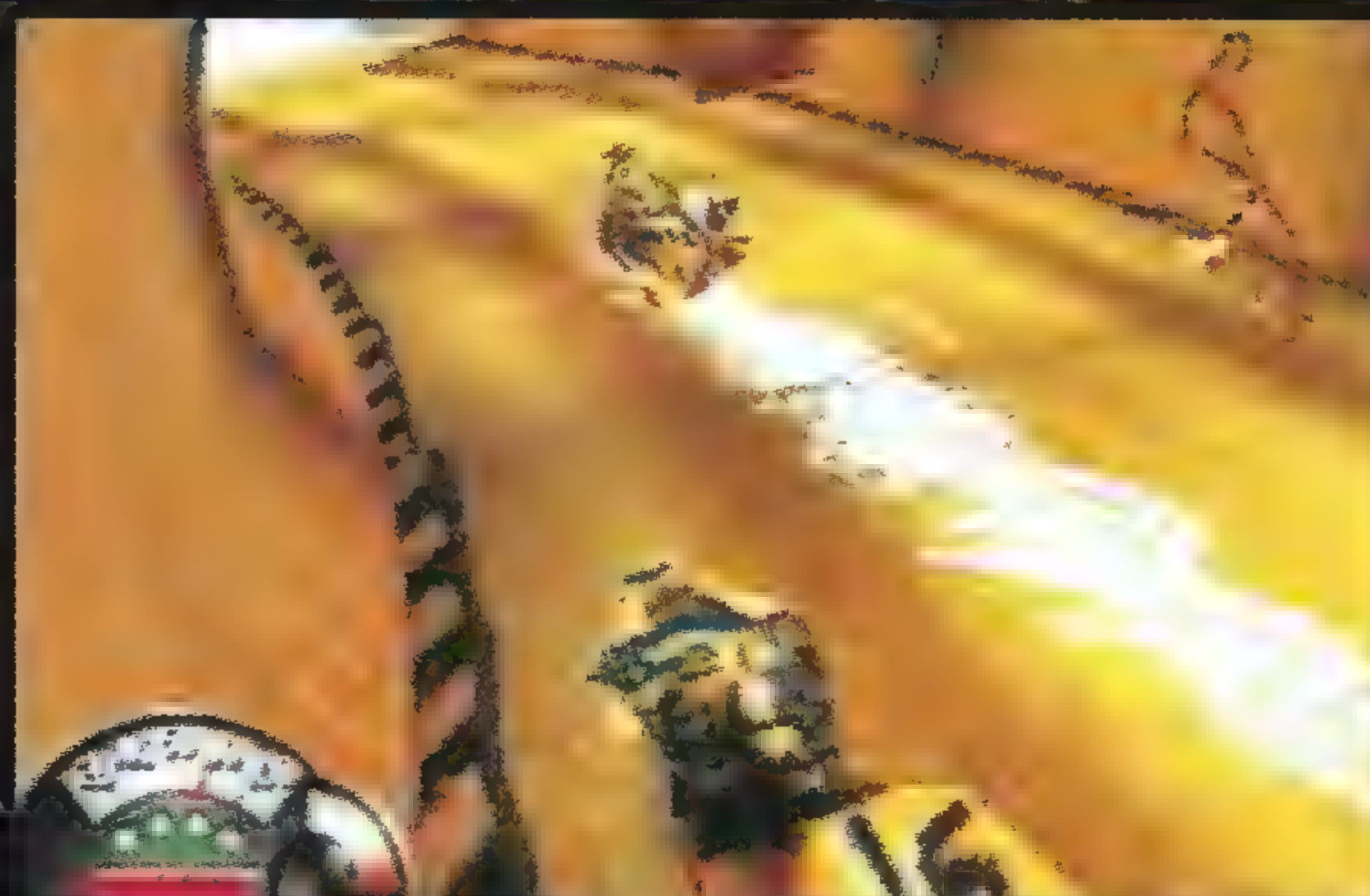
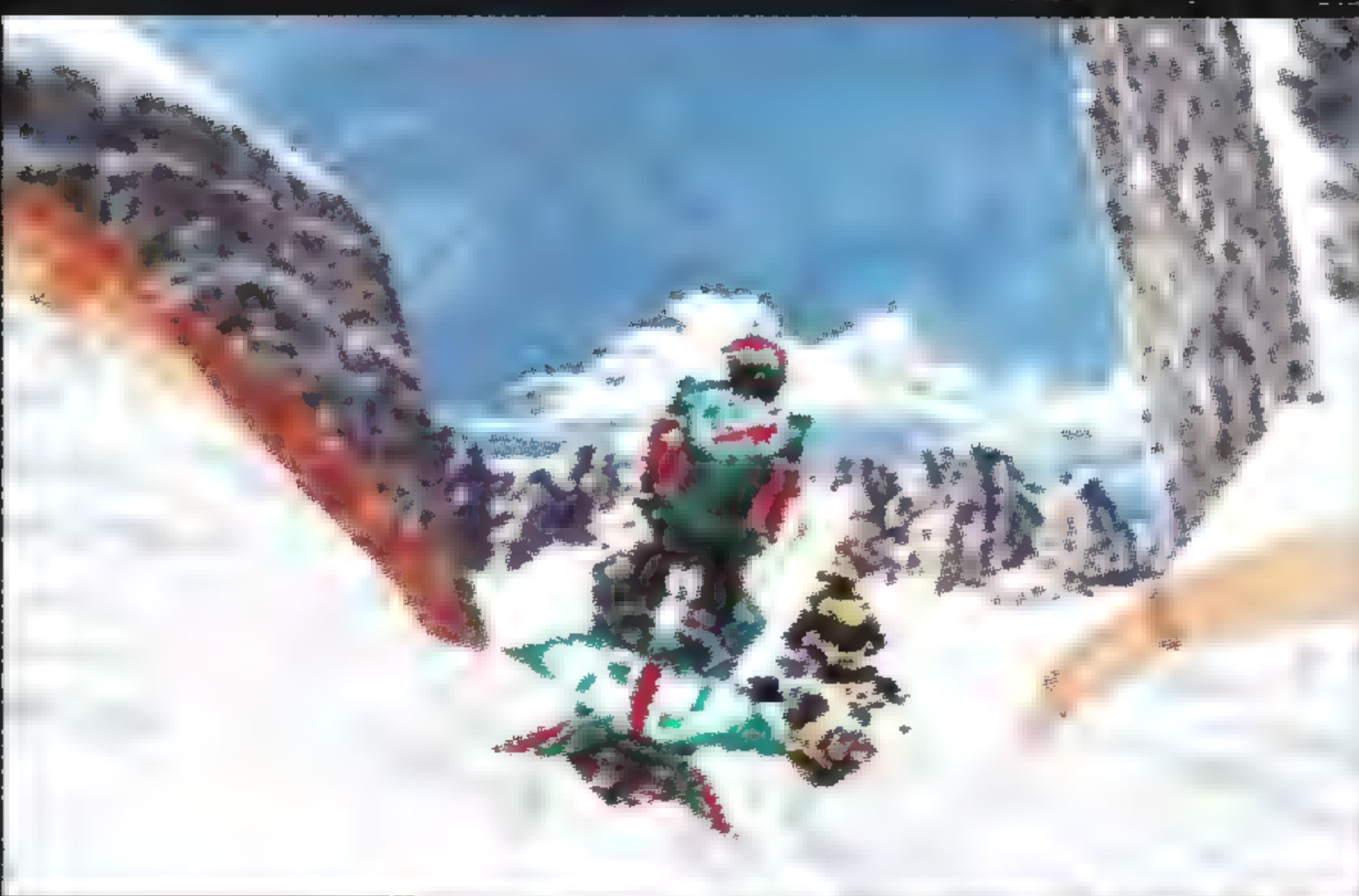
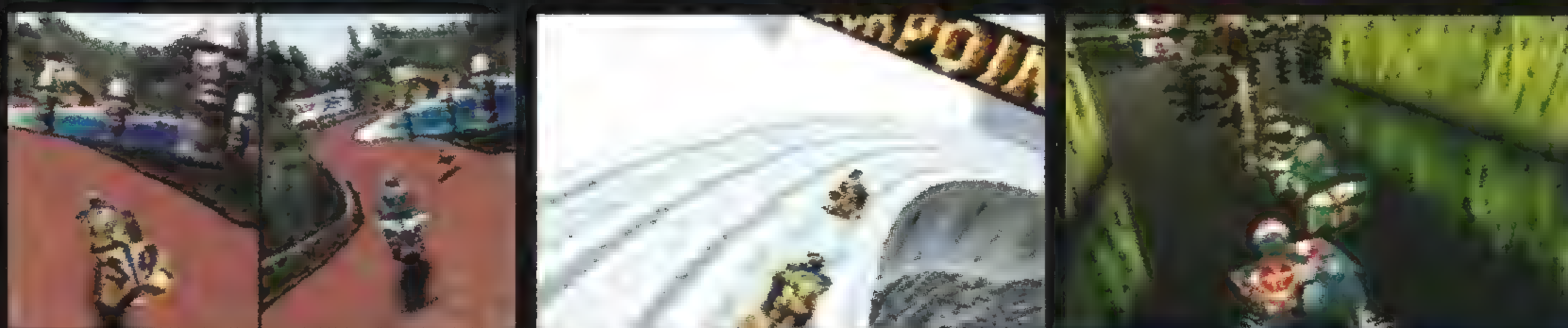
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Jet Moto. Racing on the edge.

And sometimes off.



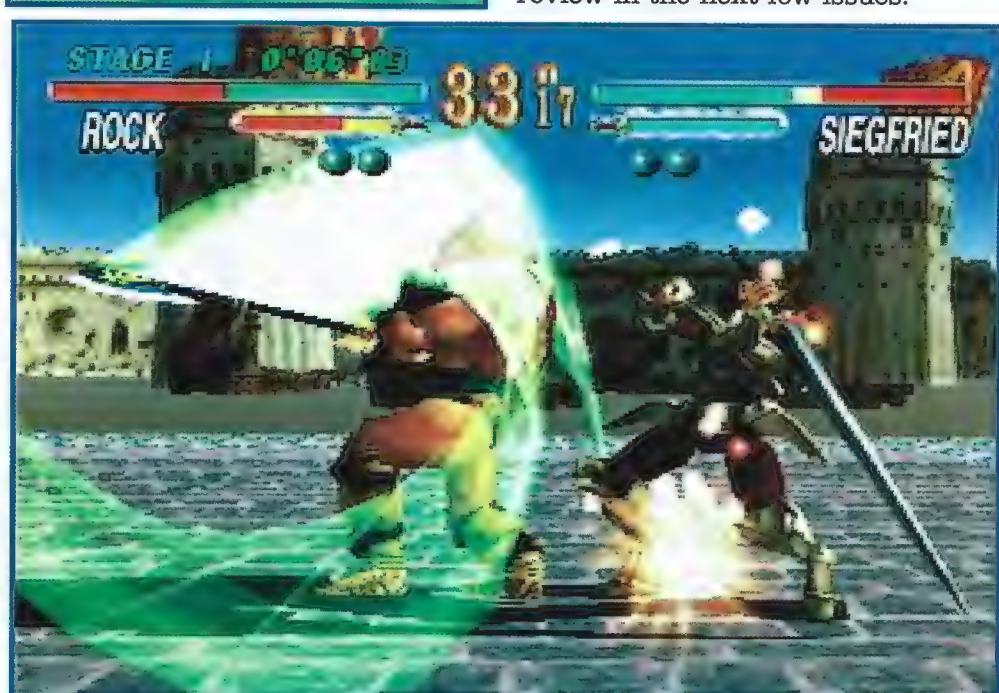
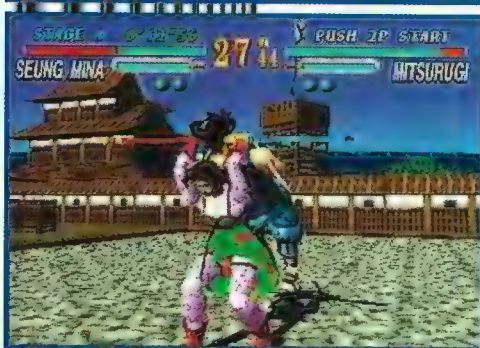


With the gut-wrenching, all-terrain racing of Jet Moto, victory isn't a thrill. It's agony. Jet Moto's ten outdoor tracks will lead you and beat you over scorching sand, choppy seas and brittle ice and snow. Your only defense? One of twenty fiercely maneuverable next-gen moto bikes. There's so much going on here, all you need to know is that the grappling hook isn't an option, it's a necessity. That's because with Jet Moto's TruePhysics, every bump, every curve and every pothole will go directly from your suspension to your spleen. It's time you took a Jet Moto test ride. Or better yet, do so against a friend on the two-player split-screen. Only this time, try to keep your eyes on the road, will you?



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For game hints call 1-800-933-5084 (7669). The charge is \$0.95 per minute. Callers under the age of 18 must get parental permission to call. Touch-tone phone is required. Available 24 hours a day/7 days a week. U.S. only. Sony Computer Entertainment logo is a trademark of Sony Corporation. PlayStation and the PlayStation logos are trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. Jet Moto, TruePhysics, U R NOT E are trademarks of Sony Interactive Entertainment Inc. ©1994 Sony Interactive Entertainment Inc. www.sony.com



SOUL BLADE

NAMCO • AVAILABLE FEBRUARY

And gaming on the PlayStation just keeps getting better and better, as yet another PS exclusive makes its way to the market. Namco's newest arcade 3D fighter, Soul Blade, is finally making its way to the Playstation this February. Yes, it was originally titled Soul Edge but, due to some legal circumstances, the name had to be changed at this late date. In any event, from the early video we've actually seen, the game looks incredible...It's exactly, if not better, than its arcade counterpart. What else would you expect from Namco? As in the translation of Tekken 2, there will be all sorts of "extras" added to the home version of Soul Blade, such as an extra two-minute long CG-rendered introduction, all new endings for all of the characters and a slew of new option modes, such as team battle mode, practice mode, survival mode, etc. In the next few weeks, we expect to have in our hands a playable version and, hopefully, we will be able to bring you a review in the next few issues.

EXPECTING



PROJECT OVERKILL™

"One of the longest, toughest, most violent shooters ever."

GameFan



www.konami.com

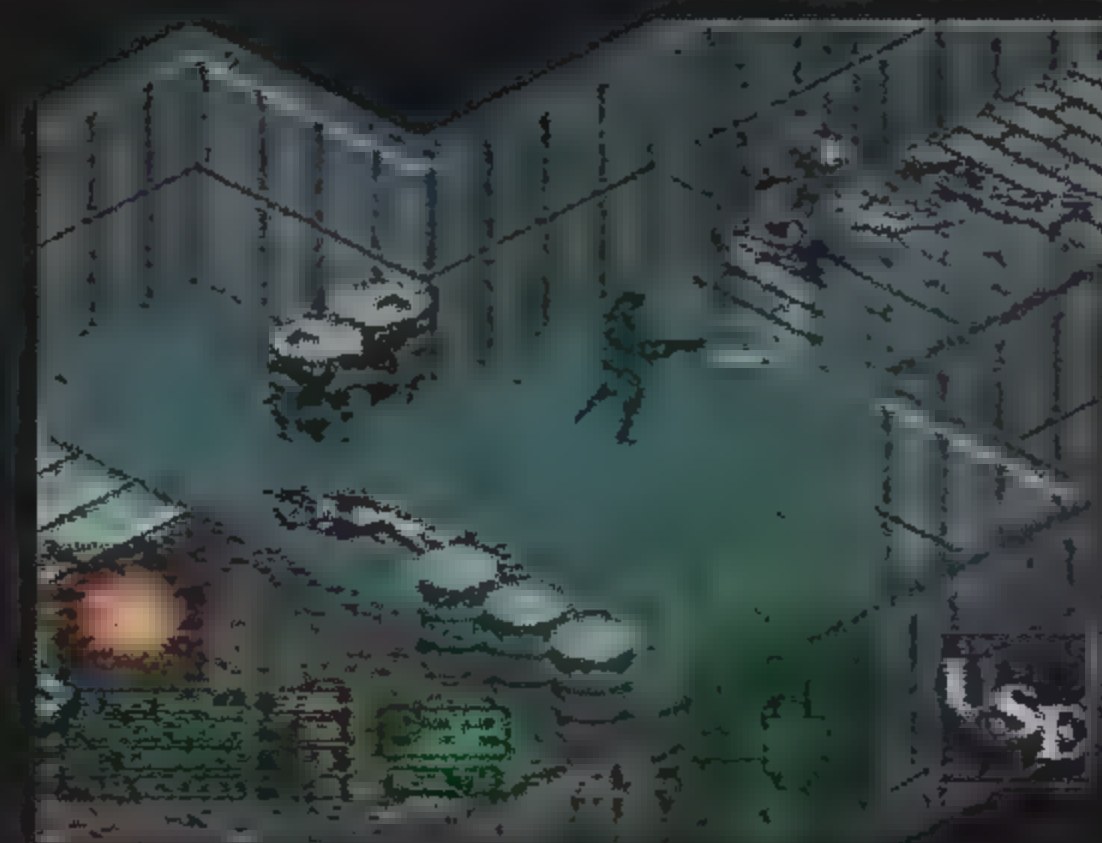


"Overkill is not only finely tuned and balanced, but a godsend for those fond of 40+ levels of blasting carnage."

GameFan

"A must for lovers of challenging, violent games."

EGM



"Hot rendered graphics, crazy transparencies, burnin' music. Another fine Konami effort."

GameFan

"Overkill offers hours of blood-drenched fun, and there's plenty of replayability...hundreds of hidden areas."

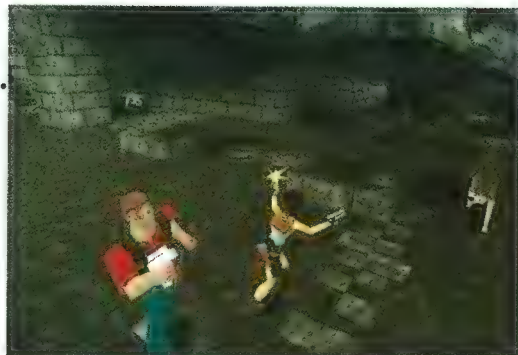
PS Extreme





IF THE GAME GRAPHICS
DON'T BLOW YOU AWAY,
ONE OF THESE WILL.

GO WHERE NO MAN
HAS EVER COME
OUT ALIVE. NOTICE
WE SAID "MAN."



TREASURE SEEKING,
PUZZLE SOLVING, ALLIGATOR
WRESTLING, AND STILL TIME
FOR A FIGHT.



SOMETIMES, HAVING A



Sometimes, you also need guts. Or a brain. Or quick
feet. Other times, you need all of the above plus
grenades, a shotgun and a matching pair
of nine millimeters. Such is your fate
when you control Lara Croft, heroine
heartthrob of Tomb Raider.



EIDOS INTERACTIVE, CORE, TOMB RAIDER, LARA CROFT AND HER LIKENESS ARE TRADEMARKS OF
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HAVE PARENT'S PERMISSION/TOUCH-TONE PHONE REQUIRED



NOTHING LIKE A
LITTLE SWIM BEFORE
FENDING OFF A PACK
OF WOLVES.



"100%, 99%, 97% - Playstation game of the year!"
Game Fan

"9.5 - Playstation game of the year!"
"Adventure game of the year!"

Ultra Game Players

"99% - Game of the year!"
PS Extreme

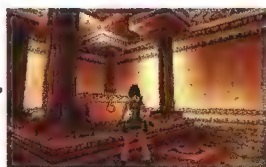
KILLER BODY JUST ISN'T ENOUGH.

NOT EVERYONE SEES
A BRIGHT LIGHT
JUST BEFORE DYING.
(LUCKY STIFFS.)

Lara has her sights on a few ancient artifacts, and she's not going to let anything or anybody get in her way. Alligators. Wolves. Thugs. They're all tempting fate once in Lara's path. But hey, what's a little temptation? Especially when everything looks this good. In the game, we mean. Check out Tomb Raider at www.tombraider.com.



EIDOS
INTERACTIVE



TOMB RAIDER™



TIGER SHARK

GT INTERACTIVE • AVAILABLE FEBRUARY

The story: In the near future, the nations of the world have increasingly turned toward the world's oceans as a source of land, food, raw materials and energy. (Can you say algae and seaweed sandwiches?) Guess what? Yep, EARTHQUAKE!!!! Japan takes the deep six under a Tsunami and 60% of the country's population dies within minutes. The Russians go scavenging and secure what remains of Japan, while the US begins to mount a defense on Japan's behalf. It seems there is a mad Russian behind the whole sashimi and the special US-designed ship that can bring the mad man to his knees is on its way from Hawaii — the Tigershark. Your country needs you, Japan needs you, GT Interactive wants you! The game is played in a real-time 3D world, both underwater and above the surface, with a number of weapons at your disposal. Tigershark should make its way to retail early next year. Look for our editorial evaluation within the pages of EXRated in an upcoming issue.

EX RATED

BLOW DOORS OR BLOW CHOW!



FEATURES:

- 25+ cars to choose from
- Race in either direction on 5 different tracks
- Includes original Pikes Peak Hill Climb
- 12 different camera angles
- Build and design your own tracks using the first-of-it's-kind track editor
- Design your own car, tires, suspension, color and more!
- 1 or 2 player action

PEAK PERFORMANCE™



ATLUS

PIKES PEAK
HILL CLIMB



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The 1996 **EXTREME** *Awards*

FOR EXCELLENCE IN GAMING

Welcome to the first annual Extreme Awards for Excellence in Gaming. In addition to recognizing the publishers and developers that we feature within the pages of PSExtreme, it is our hope that you will be able to use the awards as your extended holiday buyer's guide. The voting procedure involved each of our editors casting ballots for their top three games in each of the categories, with the results then being tabulated. Avid readers will notice that some games placed higher in the awards than other games that had been rated higher within the pages of EXRATED. This is the result of establishing consensus opinions in each category. We encourage your comments with regard to the Extreme Awards, as we believe that they showcase all that was great about PlayStation gaming in 1996.

GAME OF THE YEAR:



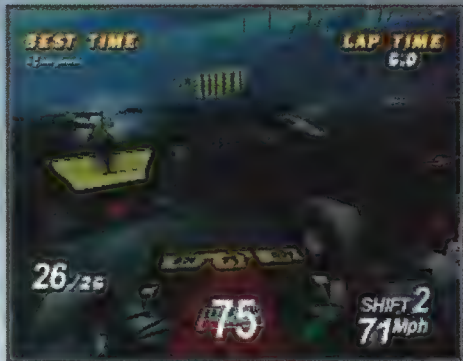
- 1) TOMB RAIDER**
- 2) RESIDENT EVIL**
- 3) CRASH BANDICOOT**

**BEST NEW CONCEPT IN
GAME DESIGN:**



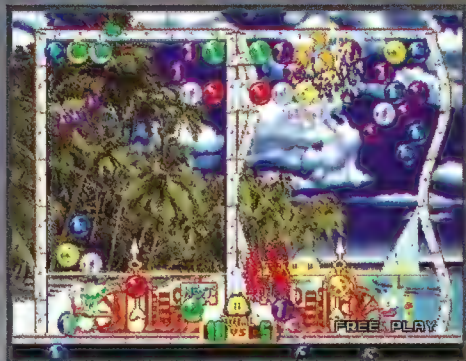
- 1) **TECMO'S DECEPTION**
- 2) TOMB RAIDER
- 3) DIE HARD TRILOGY

**DRIVING GAME
OF THE YEAR:**



- 1) **FORMULA 1**
- 2) MOTOR TOON GP
- 3) RIDGE RACER REVOLUTION

**PUZZLE GAME
OF THE YEAR:**



- 1) **BUST-A-MOVE 2**
- 2) SUPER BUSTER BROTHERS
- 3) BUBBLE BOBBLE

**ARCADE TRANSLATION
OF THE YEAR:**



- 1) **TEKKEN 2**
- 2) STREET FIGHTER ALPHA 2
- 3) NAMCO MUSEUM #1

**ACTION/PLATFORM
GAME OF THE YEAR:**



- 1) **CRASH BANDICOOT**
- 2) JUMPING FLASH 2
- 3) BUSBY 3D

**STRATEGY GAME
OF THE YEAR:**



- 1) **RETURN FIRE**
- 2) WORMS
- 3) WING COMMANDER III

**SPORTS GAME OF
THE YEAR:**



- 1) **NCAA GAMEBREAKER**
- 2) NHL FACE OFF '97
- 3) INT'L TRACK & FIELD

**ROLE PLAYING GAME
OF THE YEAR:**



- 1) **KING'S FIELD II**
- 2) KING'S FIELD
- 3) SUIKODEN

**FIGHTING GAME
OF THE YEAR:**



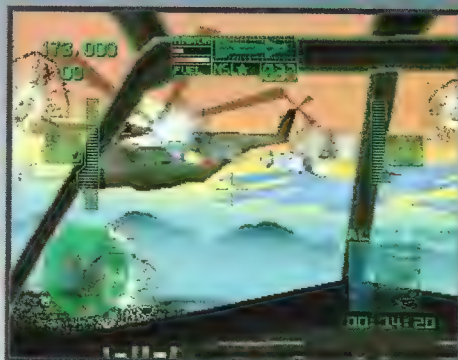
- 1) **TEKKEN 2**
- 2) STREET FIGHTER ALPHA 2
- 3) STAR GLADIATOR

**ACTION GAME
OF THE YEAR:**



- 1) **TWISTED METAL 2**
- 2) DIE HARD TRILOGY
- 3) ASSAULT RIGS

**COMBAT SIMULATION
OF THE YEAR:**



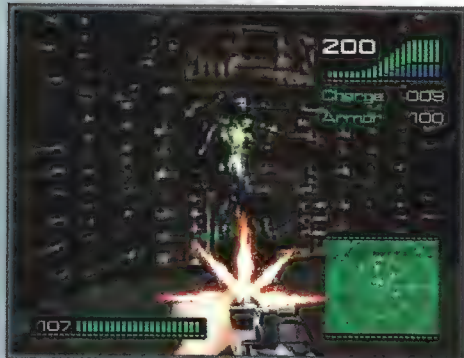
- 1) **BLACK DAWN**
- 2) THUNDERSTRIKE 2
- 3) TOP GUN

**BEST GAME MUSIC
OF THE YEAR:**



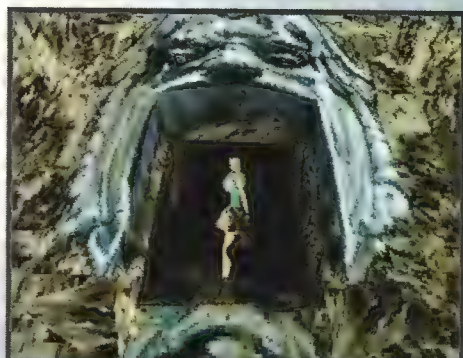
- 1) **TWISTED METAL 2**
- 2) TEKKEN 2
- 3) WIPEOUT XL

**FIRST PERSON SHOOTER
OF THE YEAR:**



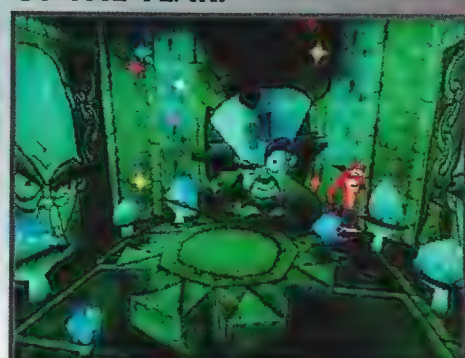
- 1) **ALIEN TRILOGY**
- 2) TUNNEL B1
- 3) DISRUPTOR

**EXPLORATION/ADVENTURE
GAME OF THE YEAR:**



- 1) **TOMB RAIDER**
- 2) RESIDENT EVIL
- 3) FADE TO BLACK

**BEST GRAPHICS
OF THE YEAR:**



- 1) **CRASH BANDICOOT**
- 2) TEKKEN 2
- 3) WIPEOUT XL

**SHOOTER
OF THE YEAR:**



- 1) **ROBOTRON X**
- 2) CONTRA: LEGACY OF WAR
- 3) LOADED

**MULTI-PLAYER GAME
OF THE YEAR:**



- 1) **INT'L TRACK & FIELD**
- 2) PITBALL
- 3) BLAST CHAMBER

**GAME DEVELOPER
OF THE YEAR:**



- 1) **CORE**
- 2) SONY INTERACTIVE STUDIOS
- 3) TIE: NAMCO/CAPCOM

The Editors' Year In Review

DAVE'S YEAR-END SUMMARY

I have been playing games since 1975 (yes, there was both electricity and silicon back when Frampton was "coming alive") and I am of the opinion that there has never been a year better than 1996, in terms of both the quality and quantity of video game software. Although we are a dedicated PlayStation magazine, make no mistake, we all play everything. If 1996 stands for anything, in this hobby we enjoy, and the field we work in, it is the year the PlayStation took over the electronic gaming market. The Sega Saturn continued its disappearing act under the weight of a glut of poor to so-so product and a skeleton marketing staff at Sega of America without a focus (releasing *Knights*, their "big" product, for 1996 in August?! Come on... winners don't make mistakes like this). Nintendo brought a limited number of 64's to American shores (300,000 — if you believe Nintendo's numbers), with an even more limited software catalogue (two titles at launch, two more in November and a total of six to eight by the end of the year) I will be the first to admit that the hardware is good and some of the special effects in *Mario 64* and *Wave Race* are breathtaking, but the third-party dollars are not there, the business model is almost suicidal and the limited amount of software available (and the price) will have most parents thinking 'PlayStation' this holiday season. How did Sony and its third party partners do it? Easy... *Tomb Raider*, *Crash Bandicoot*, *Tekken 2*, *Resident Evil*, *GameDay '97*, *Jumping Flash 2*, *Motor Toon Grand Prix*, and the list goes on. (By-the-by, I've played both the Saturn and PS versions of this game, and it is one of the strongest sales tools that Sony has... the Saturn version is a slow, choppy, pale imitation of the stellar PlayStation title.)

My personal picks of the year are *Tomb Raider*, *GameDay '97* and *Crash Bandicoot* — it's really, really hard to have more fun than with these three games. Next year? Look for a couple revolutionary titles from Sony and even more realistic, graphically-brilliant games in 1997. Sony is aware of Nintendo's technical achievement and they will counter-punch with software that will make this year's stuff look 16-bit in comparison.

ZACH'S YEAR-END SUMMARY

1996 was a year in which a former football great got away with double homicide; in which we had the most predictable Presidential election in history (I'm still shocked we didn't vote for a grumpy old man who can't shake hands and keep his balance at the same time); and in which we got to play the most incredible home video games ever made on our PlayStations. I know that we're going through a "retro-gaming" craze at the moment—and I'll be the first guy to admit I've played my copy of *Williams Arcade Classics* 'til my thumbs were bleeding—but there's never been a period in the 25-year history of home gaming when there's been so much sheer quality. Just look at how many Gold X scores we've doled out this year—there are a half-dozen good or great games in almost every game category there is. So how could 1997 possibly be any better? I'd like to see more RPGs; I'm still amazed that, even after the "surprising" success of *King's Field*, game companies still need to be convinced there's a market for them. (The day *Working Designs* starts

producing PlayStation RPGs is the day I run around the house with chocolate pudding in my undies while shouting "I feel pretty"—oh, wait I did that yesterday.) I'd like more games that take advantage of the Link Cable; I know it's a very small percentage of the PlayStation population that uses the thing, but it seems (speaking from a non-programmer viewpoint, so I could be very wrong) that it wouldn't be hard to support it in ANY two-player game. I'd like to see intelligent discussions in the PlayStation newsgroups on the Internet instead of the current endless and pointless flame wars. Oh, and I'd like to attend a KISS reunion concert to see Ace Frehley wail on his Les Paul and Gene Simmons spit blood all over his hairy gut. Then I can die happy. I'd like to end on a sappy personal note: I've been writing about video games in various magazines for seven years now, but *PSExtreme* is the first magazine that's treated me like part of a family, and not just a freelance weasel. Thank you to Dave, Mark, Skeetch, Tim, and Greg for making me feel welcome and wanted.

ALEX'S YEAR-END SUMMARY

I've been waiting for this opportunity all year long; at last I get to tell it like it is. As I'm sure you know, Dave gets to write the editorial every month, leaving my brilliant thoughts behind in a cloud of Glade "Country Garden" air freshener.

This has truly been a phenomenal year for Sony and its PlayStation. The consumers, of which I will always count myself as one, along with the third party developers, have embraced this system like no other in the history of video games. Although there were a number of outstanding titles available, at the launch of the system, what I think really turned the tide for Sony is when *Acclaim's "Bust a Move"* was released. Now, I know what you're thinking, but let me explain. When the system first came out Sony was insistent on 3D graphics. What resulted was a lot of 3D games, the majority being nothing more than average. The truly "fun" games were left behind. Then came *Bust a Move*, and shortly thereafter, *Worms from Ocean*. The next thing you know, in addition to all of these fancy 3D shooters and such, we've got some really fun games.

Of course, there's no way I can discount the impact of the sports/driving titles. Games like *NFL Gameday* and *Ridge Racer* immediately positioned the PlayStation as the console to own. Even with the introduction of the Nintendo 64, there is no question in anyone's mind, that if you're into sports titles, the PlayStation is your home. The best news, however, is still to come. As the developers are getting more comfortable programming for the PlayStation, the quality of the software just keeps getting better and better. Look for these amazing titles to hit retail in '97: *Final Fantasy 7*, *Resident Evil 2*, *Tekken 3*, *Lethal Enforcers*, *Gameday 97*, *Vette*, *Pitfall 3D*—the list could go on for two pages. Needless to say, we had every reason to be thankful in '96 (except for the reelection of Mr. V chip), and even more reason to look forward to '97.

ERIC'S YEAR-END SUMMARY

What a year! The PlayStation truly lived up to its billing as THE gaming system to carry gamers into

the next century. Nearly all genres were filled with soon to be classic titles, ranging from the outstanding *Tomb Raider* and *Crash Bandicoot*, to the frenetic sports titles of *International Track & Field* and *NFL Gameday '97*. Racing titles also received top scores from games like *Ridge Racer Revolution* and *Formula 1*. *Bubsy 3D*, *Fade to Black*, *Thunderstrike 2*, and *Tekken 2* round out my personal Top 10 list. In retrospect, it's odd not to see either a basketball or baseball title among my top ten, but the PlayStation hasn't been kind to either spor... so far. However, *In the Zone 2* does make my honorable mention squad.

What should we look forward to seeing in 1997? I'm sure we'll see many, many, many sequels to the hits of '96, as well as some original work from the hundreds of developers working wee hours into the night, just for gaming benefit! What I'd like to see, however, may or may not come to fruition. Specifically, I want a baseball game with a field level perspective (been waiting 15 years for that one!), a true, first person perspective, RPG in the *Excalibur* tradition, and a shooter that's so imaginative that I can't even imagine it! Well, we shall see what occurs over the next 12 months, and you can be certain that no one else will bring it to you like *PSExtreme*!

GREG'S YEAR-END SUMMARY

My year-end review was going to be filled with some snappy repartee and humorous commentary on this crazy industry that, relatively speaking, only a few are privileged enough to work in. But, since Zach, Dave Alex and heck, even Eric seem to have filled those shoes, instead I'll tell you about what I did on my summer vacation —just kidding, but really, it has been an amazing first year for Sony Interactive and their PlayStation. It started with a bang (in relation to Sega's weak attempt at gaining the upper-hand with their early launch of the Saturn) and hasn't slowed down, even for a second. By Christmas, there will be over 150 titles available for the PlayStation and, the remarkable thing is, a huge percentage of these titles fall into the Gold and Silver categories. Some of the most memorable games that have taken up my personal time this year include: *Crash Bandicoot*, *Tomb Raider*, *Die Hard Trilogy*, *Alien Trilogy*, *Tunnel B1*, *Resident Evil*, *Motor Toon Grand Prix*, *Street Fighter Alpha 2*, *Destruction Derby 2*, *Tekken 2*, *Twisted Metal 2*, *Wipeout XL*, *Ridge Racer Revolution* and *Doom*, and believe me, I could go on. But, instead, I would like to point out one thing that impresses me most about the library of PlayStation games available today. For the first time, in recent console history, a good portion of the major software hits are coming from US and European development houses, as well as Japan. Developers like *Psygnosis*, *Probe*, *Core*, *Black Ops*, *Player 1*, *Single Trac*, *Neon*, *Electronic Arts* and Sony themselves have enriched our playing experiences and, from the early glimpses we've already received, next year will prove to be just as exciting if not more. I hope you've had as much fun with your PlayStation games as we've had covering them for you. You have an amazing system, in that little grey box attached to your TV, and there's going to be plenty of reasons why you'll keep on using it. Well, gotta go make the donuts.



SLICING THROUGH THE THIRD DIMENSION TO THE FINAL GALACTIC SHOWDOWN.

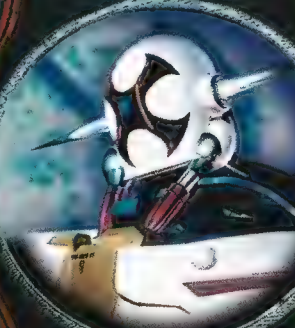
It's 2348 and ten of the mightiest galactic warriors are fighting for control of the Earth's fate. Using Plasma power—energy drawn from the user's own mental strength—the good, the bad, and the freaking ugly are each packing hundreds of weapon attacks, countless combos, and the ultimate battle barrage, Plasma Finals. Pick from any of the 4 different game modes of this hyper-realistic 3D fighter and you'll discover the level of precise control only CAPCOM can deliver.

All against intense backgrounds like Neo Tokyo, Federation Spaceport, and Planet Zeta; the perfect arenas to master the fine art of mercy killing.



FOURTH EMPIRE

STAR GLADIATOR



STAR
GLADIATOR

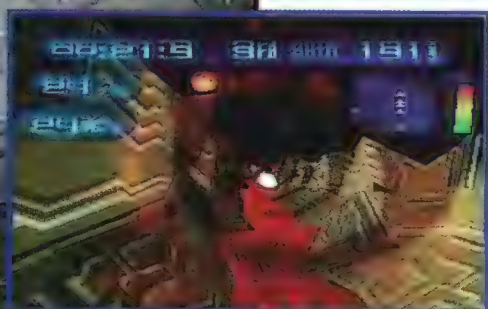
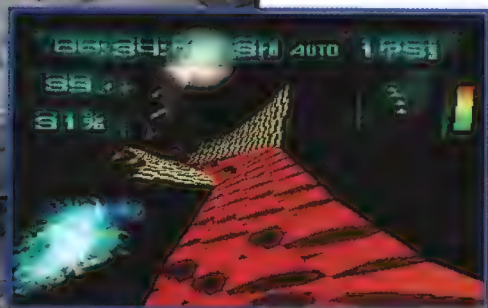
EPISODE: I
FINAL CRUSADE



CAPCOM
www.capcom.com

STARWINDER

PUBLISHED AND DEVELOPED BY MINDSCAPE



Oh, how I look forward to games with no defining traits and little personality ... they make it so easy to write a review. The latest in the "me-too" genre is Mindscape's Starwinder: The Ultimate Space Race — 44 sections of track (or 11 "Quadrants", as they are called in the game) where you must stay close to the floor (the energy force) without touching it.

The basics found in Wipeout, Wipeout XL, Total Eclipse Turbo, Hi Octane, and even Mindscape's own Cyberspeed (released late last year) are present in Starwinder — namely a number of different weapons to fire at your opponents, different kinds of tracks that emphasize things like spinning your vehicle along the track, vaulting from one section to the other and the like. You take on the role of one Connor Rhodes in this intergalactic combat/racing game. As the very irritating, Mega Race rip-off, commentator follows your inevitable progress through the first few races (it is nearly impossible to finish anywhere but 1st in the initial



two Quadrants), you are recognized as the worthy challenger that we all know you are and the competition becomes a little tougher.

Graphically, you've got your basic PlayStation textures with a limited number of polygons (kind of makes you wonder why they didn't try to upgrade the quality of the textures; a la Crash Bandicoot), moving within a deep space backdrop. The vehicles look like your basic fantasy-space travel cars — really no different than the ones I used to see in Elite on the Amiga (except for the textures) and what they look like really doesn't matter anyway ... you only have one view available, windshield.

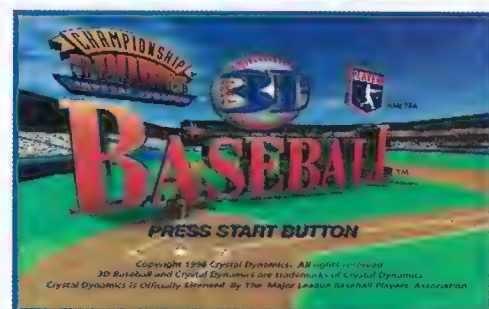
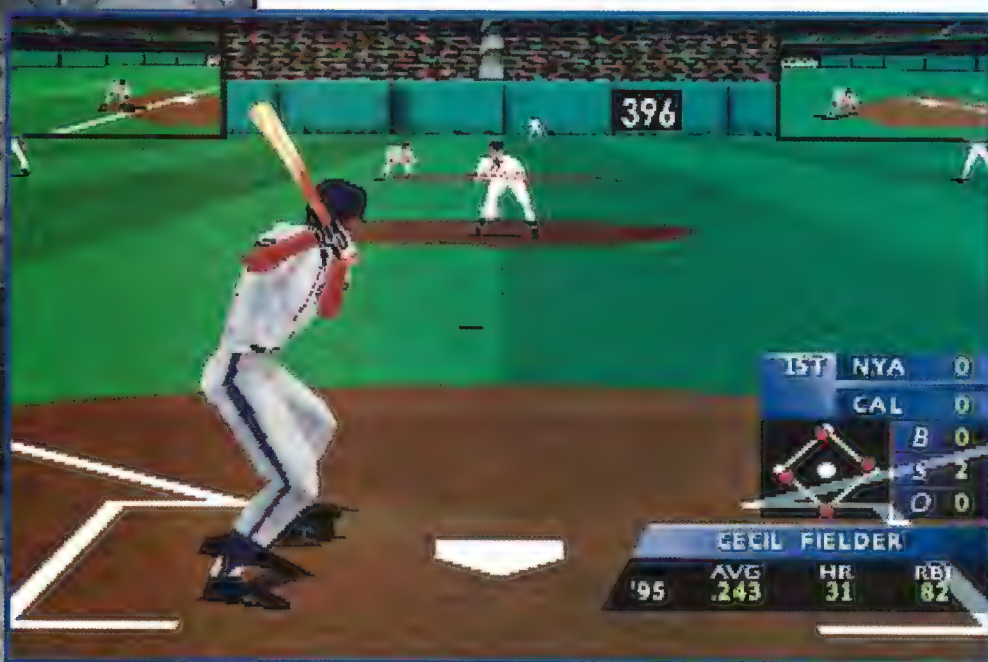
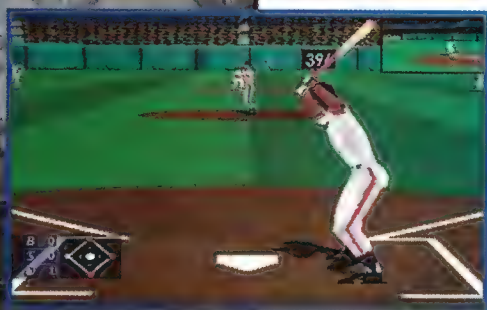
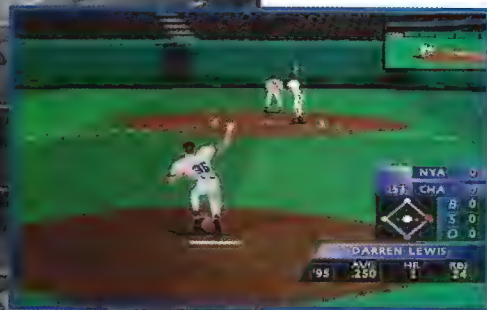
Gameplay-wise, if you like the games mentioned above, then you will find nothing objectionable in Starwinder. You won't find anything that will make you NEED to add this game to your collection, either. I found myself just kind of sitting back and cruising through the experience — no edge of the seat, no sweaty palm action. All I needed was a cup of warm milk and viva la siesta!



EXPERIMENTAL

3D BASEBALL

PUBLISHED AND DEVELOPED BY CRYSTAL DYNAMICS



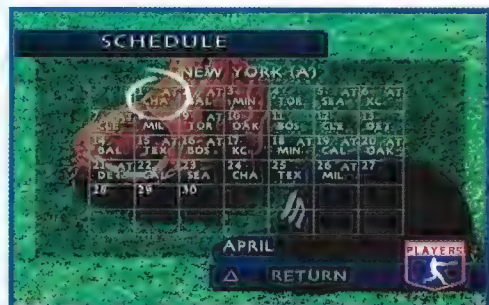
Crystal Dynamics' 3D Baseball is just good enough to tease you into wanting more. It's not that what's there isn't good... it is, but the features list is lacking a little. Let's get into the meat and potatoes.

You have to get past the fact that the game is shipping over six weeks after the conclusion of the 1996 Major League Baseball season, and get into a kind of Spring mode. Once you've accomplished that, and fired up the game, the first thing that will strike you is the graphic detail of what people in the game industry commonly refer to as "glue screens." The player photos are the best I've seen — they REALLY look like photographs and not pixel mug shots. Gameplay is also delivered in the PS's high-res mode. The stadiums and polygon players are crisp and detailed, although the graphic design of the stadiums need some help (more on that later).

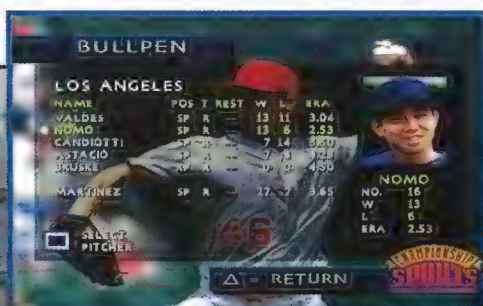
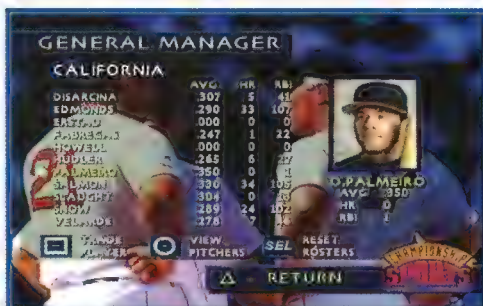
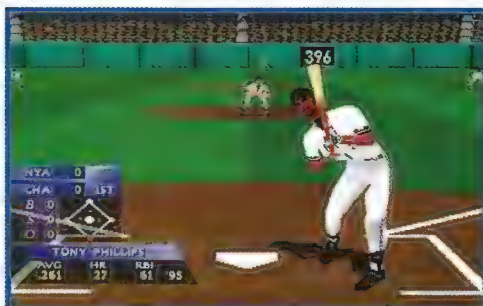
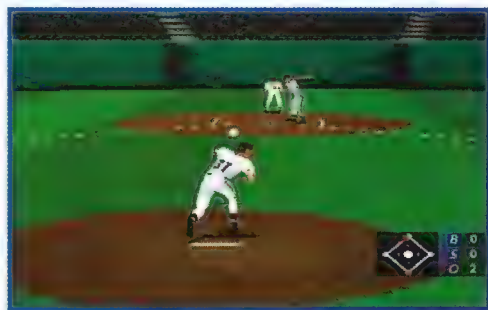
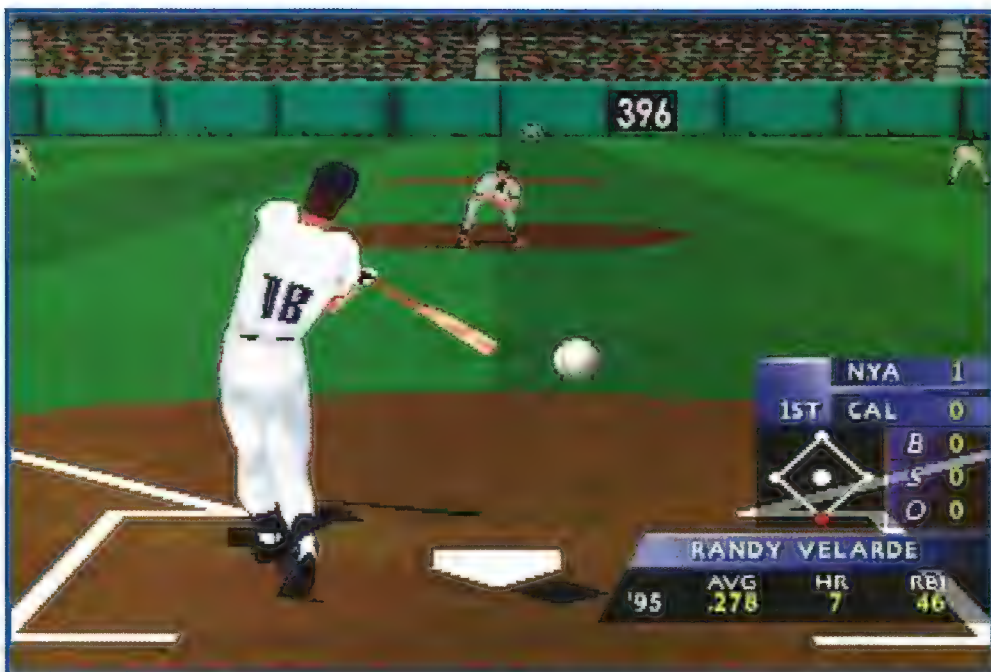
Gameplay-wise, 3D Baseball is pure arcade action. Although season play, with a good statistical database, an MLBPA license, full rosters and substitutions, is supported, once you are on the field, it's

strictly arcade hitting, pitching and fielding. The game controls well, although there is a little of that tell-tale lag found when using polygon animation. This manifests itself most directly when attempting to hit a 90 mph+ fastball, or when diving for a sharp grounder — you have to guess and anticipate a little. But, that's not unlike the 'real' thing.

Graphically, 3D Baseball accomplishes quite a bit on the technical side. The animation is smooth and fairly quick, the characters are detailed (as detailed as they can be without actual team uniforms), the scale of the four ballparks is immense — really giving you a feeling of what it's like to be roving center field, and there are a number of camera cuts the computer makes that, for the most part, stay focused on the action and bring a fresh approach to the game. Another cool detail is the pop-up screens that give you career statistics on each of the 700+ players in the game — it really gives you a sense of a television broadcast. Play-by-play is courtesy of Van Earl Wright, the voice of Slam & Jam '96 — it's good but has that Genesis Sportstalk Baseball problem of misplaced accents ... "The



EXTRATED



count is TWO balls and ONE strike" (place your own high and low pitches here). His humor can also grow a little tiresome, as do his drawn-out announcements of player names.

What keeps 3D Baseball out of Gold territory is a combination of all of the things that are either over-simplified, or missing entirely. The game has no Major League license, which means no real teams, stadiums or cities. This omission is made more noticeable by the fact that the player art is so detailed — you just know that the jersey and cap logos would have looked great. And, while the 3D cameras do a pretty good job of covering the action, without the real

ballparks, the reality factor suffers. Also, the field of play, in the four provided stadiums, is pretty bland. Other than the real-time scoreboard featured in each, there are no outstanding architectural features in any of them. Gameplay is solid, but there's no new feature that revolutionizes the hitting or pitching experience — certainly nothing that stands above the other four or five PS baseball games currently on retail shelves.

In the end, 3D Baseball delivers a solid rendition of the grand old game — it's just not spectacular. It's good looking, fun to play and a quality effort. Baseball fans will want to give it a look.

Dave

X

THE BOTTOM LINE

85%

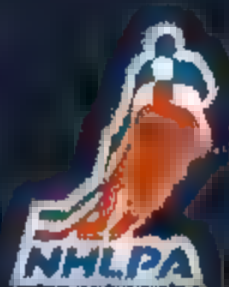
What keeps 3D Baseball out of Gold territory is a combination of all of the things that are either over-simplified, or missing entirely ... In the end, 3D Baseball delivers a solid rendition of the grand old game — it's just not spectacular. It's good looking, fun to play and a quality effort. Baseball fans will want to give it a look.

X

SILVER X



He spent years scrapping,
clawing and grinding for the
right to play in the NHL.[®] All
you did was buy your way in.
Don't think he won't be looking
for you along the boards.



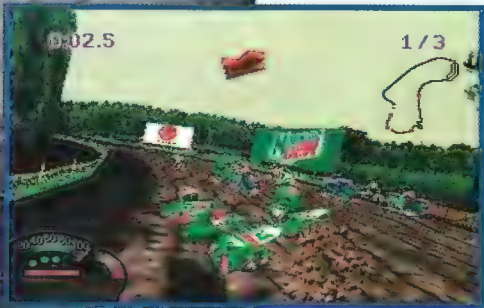


You're a marked man. But try not to let that intimidate you. Because you have all the teams with all the starting lineups. You have advanced gameplay and artificial intelligence, with players cycling and executing powerplays just like they do in the pros. You can create your own strategy for breakouts, forechecking and offensive and defensive attacks. You'll be able to swarm the net or focus your offense around your right winger, left winger or center. You've got Icon Passing, which lets you execute give-and-goes as well as any assist leader. Of course, when you go skate to skate with the likes of Jagr, Lemieux, Hatcher, Coffey and Brodeur, there's one thing you haven't got. A prayer.



JET MOTO

PUBLISHED BY SONY - DEVELOPED BY SINGLE TRAC

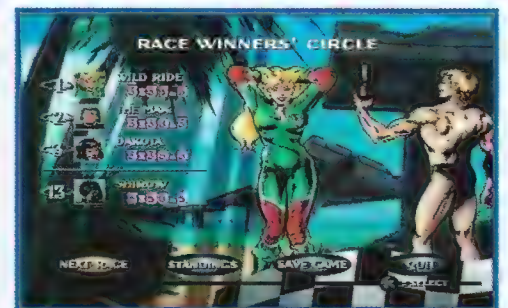


The whole Jet Ski racing concept is an intriguing one that really hasn't been explored in any great detail to date. That will all change this holiday season as both Sony and Nintendo plan to release variations on the theme. When I first stumbled across Sony's "Jet Moto" at the E3 show in Los Angeles this year, I wasn't that impressed; the animation was chunky and it was about as slow as molasses in January. I wasn't that concerned, however, because the game was being developed by Single Trac, the same folks who brought us Twisted Metal. With that in mind, I just sat back and waited for the finished product to hit my desk.

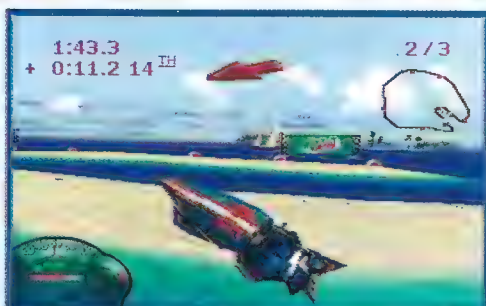
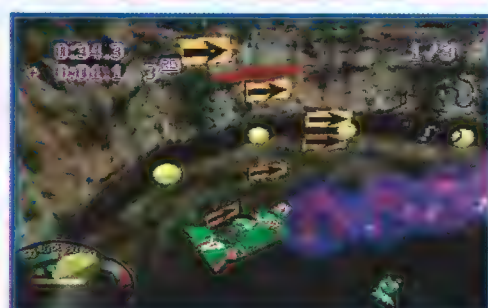
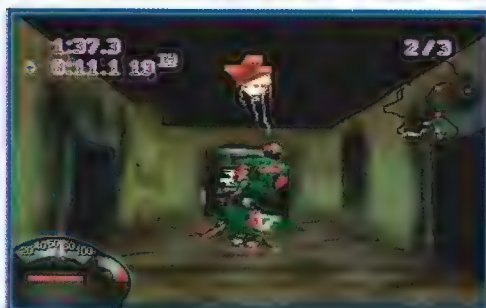
OK, so you're asking yourself, what's up with this "Jet Moto" thing anyway? Well, it's a combination of Jet Ski racing and Motocross through a variety of different terrains. From a selection stand point, you have your choice of four different teams on which to race with five different racers on each. As you would expect, each racer has their own specific

characteristics with regard to handling, acceleration etc. A unique attribute to consider, however, is "mass." You'll soon find out that throwing your weight around has a new meaning in Jet Moto! Needless to say, your choice of racer is critical. In addition, you've got a nice assortment of turbo's, shortcuts, and a nifty little sling that propels you around corners (if appropriately timed) at blinding speeds. There are three different tracks in the beginning; if you finish first in each one, you are rewarded with additional, more challenging courses to tackle.

The first thing you'll notice in this game, or any other video game for that matter, is the graphic presentation; and in this regard, Jet Moto is a little disappointing. So much of the game is played out over water, yet the water is almost indistinguishable. The wake behind the vehicle is a joke; it looks like Don King's hair on a good hair day! On a positive note, however, the player animation is outstanding; every movement is executed seamlessly.



EXTRATED

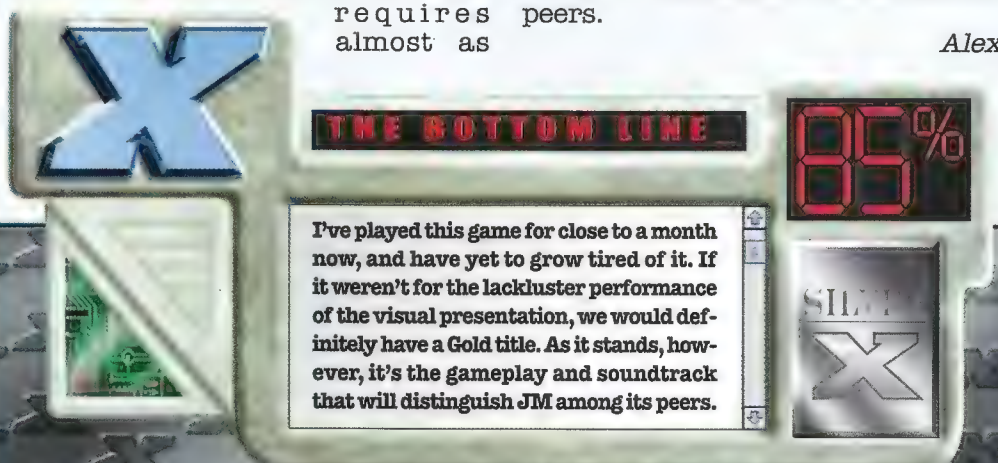


Don't get me wrong, it's not that the game is hard to look at, it's just that you would expect so much more from a second generation title. Musically, the news is much better. You couldn't ask for a better sound track. It's sort of a Pulp Fiction, Techno combination, that works well on every course. The best news, however, is the gameplay.

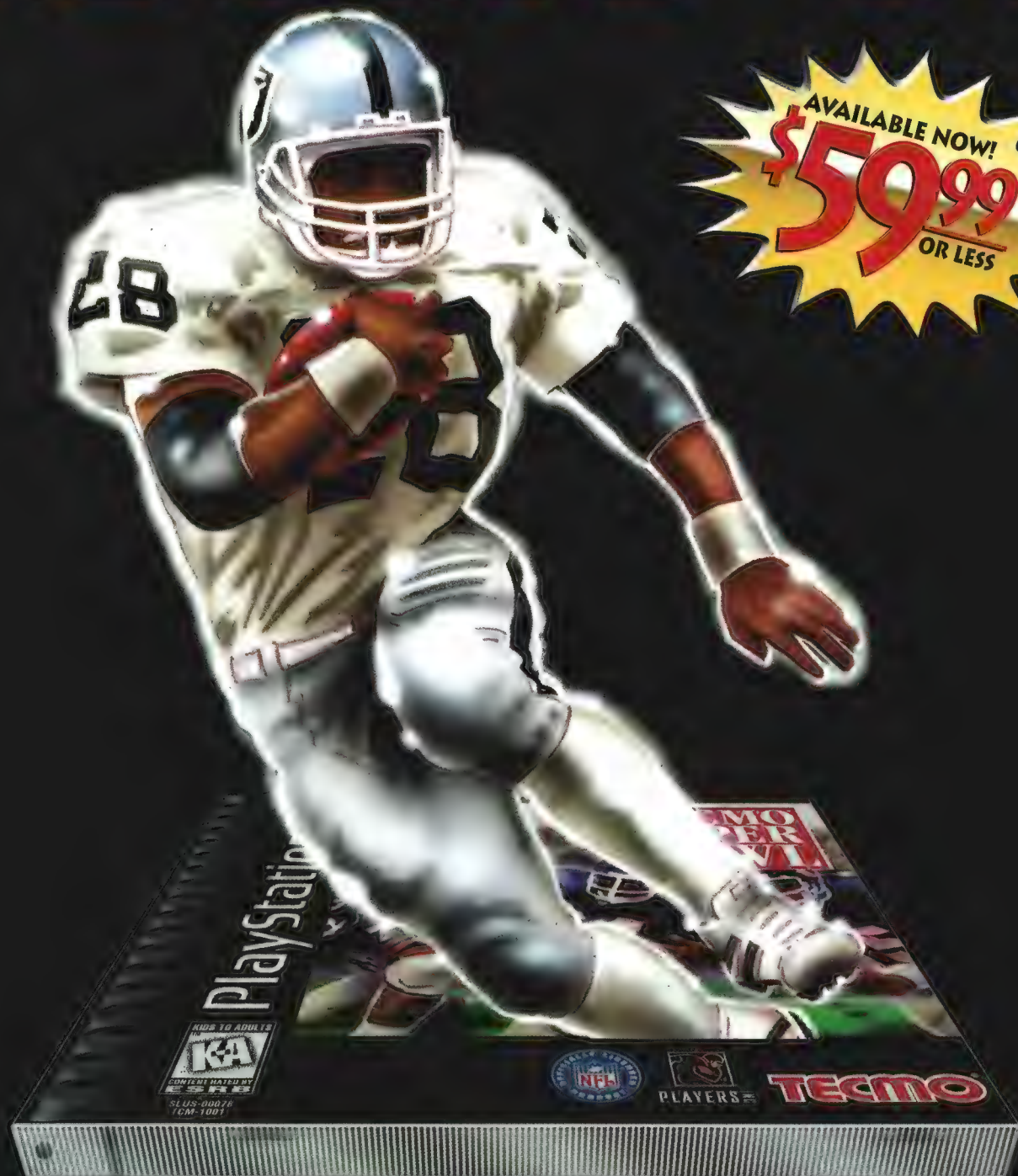
Whatever the folks at Single Trac left out of the visual presentation, they saved for gameplay. Jet Moto is non stop action. From knowing when to use the turbo, to perfecting the timing of your sling, Jet Moto requires almost as

much strategy as it does racing skill. Each track requires different skills and makes you utilize different aspects of your vehicle's performance characteristics to win the race. Unlike just about every other racer out there, JM promises to be a different experience every time you boot it up. I've played this game for close to a month now, and have yet to grow tired of it. If it weren't for the lackluster performance of the visual presentation, we would definitely have a Gold title. As it stands, however, it's the gameplay and soundtrack that will distinguish JM among its peers.

Alex



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PER BOWL™

IT'S UN-BOWL-IEVABLE!

CREATE YOUR OWN SUPER TEAM

Tecmo Super Bowl allows the user to trade any player, to any team, at any time. With this feature you have the ability to create your own Super Team. Just be careful when you're playing a friend. You had better make sure he didn't set you up. The only advice we can give is check your opponent's roster.

LIVE COMMENTARY

Tecmo Super Bowl's announcer gives true play by play commentary, not just an occasional phrase or two. If perhaps you think he's an idiot, you always have the option of turning him off.

TOURNAMENT MODE

Over the years Tecmo Super Bowl players have let us know about the friendly competitions which sometimes take place. This new version has a built in tournament mode for a



total of 8 players playing one on one till one of the players wins the tournament. Chips and drinks are sadly not included.

DIFFICULTY LEVELS

Knowing that some people haven't been playing Tecmo Super Bowl for years we've included 3 difficulty settings. Easy, Normal and Hard. Our football game gives you the ability to grow with the game. Internally we call this a screen save 'cause you don't have to throw a rock through the TV screen when you get frustrated with the game.

INSTANT REPLAY

If you want to analyze the last several seconds of play, simply pause the game and start the instant replay. In addition you can go frame by frame to fully analyze all of the action. Then again, you may not want to see the interception again, and again, and again, and again.

NEW RECORDS & STATS

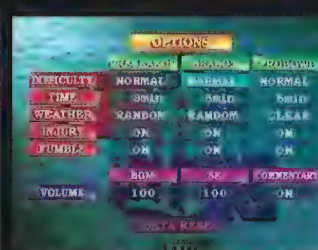
Tecmo's stats engine has always been unsurpassed. This year we've added the ability to keep the stats from any player in any position even if it's only for 1 play during the entire season. Here's your one and only chance to re-write the record book.

NEW PLAYBOOK

From the game play menu, you now have access to the entire playbook for the immediate play. ...for more plays than you can possibly want, use, call, send-in, modify, change, and/or run as the case may be.

VARIABLE WEATHER CONDITIONS

Ordinary football games sometimes have weather conditions. So far as we know, Tecmo Super Bowl is the only game to actually change the weather during the game. So one minute it could be raining,



and then it could start snowing, or then again stop or actually it's too variable to give you all of the possible scenarios.

MORE, MORE AND MORE

We've tried to highlight some of the most important new features of Tecmo Super Bowl for the Sony PlayStation. Obviously there are more features than we can possibly list. Tecmo Super Bowl is one of the most realistic and sophisticated football simulators ever created. Aside from all of the technical improvements, think about the following:

- 1 TECMO® SUPER BOWL™
- 1 SONY™ PLAYSTATION™
- 1 TELEVISION
- + 2 OR MORE PLAYERS
- = GREAT FOOTBALL FUN

If you like REAL FOOTBALL WITH REAL PLAYERS you'll LOVE TECMO® SUPER BOWL™

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You're There



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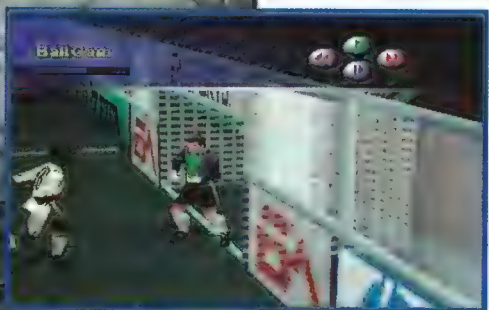
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PLAYERS™

FIFA 97

PUBLISHED BY EA - DEVELOPED BY EXTENDED PLAY



EA Sports might be fighting a losing battle, against Sony Sports in the bloody trio of Baseball, Basketball and Football Wars—but when it comes to the world's most POPULAR sport, EA is Patton, Rommel and Schwarzkopf all rolled into one. First, there was FIFA 96, which reigned as the best PlayStation soccer game, with a mind-numbing combo of teams, players, and options; now, there's FIFA 97, which enhances the already stellar gameplay while taking the graphics to 32-bit heights.

Let's do a quick summary of the main menu options so we can get to all the cool new stuff. Friendly is a one-game exhibition. League lets you guide one or more teams through one of twelve international leagues with over 3,000 total players. Tournament is a 24-team World Cup copy. Playoff is a 16-team version; Transfers (a new option in FIFA 97) lets you trade players to create new League teams; Options lets you adjust the gameplay to your whims; Restore lets you load a League or Tournament in progress.

The various in-game kicks and tackles are almost unchanged from FIFA 96. You can run, pass, shoot (or clear) the ball, lob, do a rainbow kick, sprint dribble, hit headers, volleys and bicycle kicks, hit one-timers and apply aftertouch, among other nifty soccer maneuvers. There are eight views of the action (one more than FIFA 96), set plays on corner kicks

and throw-ins, and rockin' music that plays during the menu and option screens.

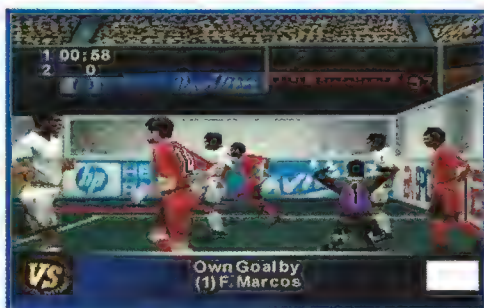
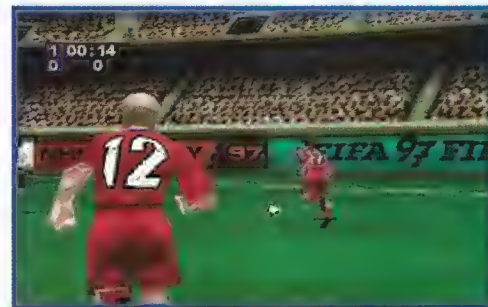
Okay, now for all the additions to FIFA 97, starting with one of the coolest: a five-on-five indoor soccer mode to compliment the outdoor version. This looks and plays wonderfully, although the gameplay views are cut in half since the arena is so small. Indoor soccer requires a whole new set of strategies and techniques, practically making FIFA 97 two games in one.

There are three gameplay modes: Simulation, with players that fatigue and limited substitutions; Action, with the faster gameplay and boosted player skills; Arcade, with the fastest gameplay, exaggerated ball movement and equivalent team skills. These speedier options should appease those players who found FIFA 96's gameplay too slow. (It's still a slower-paced game than the blistering pace of Adidas Power Soccer or Goal Storm.)

More miscellaneous stuff: If you're playing the computer, it automatically adjusts to one of four skill levels to match your own ability and keep you challenged. There are two control modes: one simple, and the other allowing for complex moves. There are three outdoor pitch sizes that can be selected (in Friendly mode) or are automatically chosen (in all other modes). There are now TWO in-game commentators: John Motson (who was also heard in FIFA 96) does the play-by-play, while Andy Gray



EX RATED



FIFA TRANSFERS			
BRAZIL	Name	Pos	Overall
America	Carlos A.	D	78
	Clair S.	D	76
	Lopes M.	D	78
BRAZIL	Name	Pos	Overall
America	Jefferson N.	D	84
	Carlos A.	D	78
	Clair S.	D	78
	Lopes M.	D	78

provides color.

The most drastic change of all is in the visual approach. FIFA 96 used bit-mapped players, but FIFA 97 uses texture-mapped, motion-captured polygon players that are the most gorgeous creations I've ever seen in a sports game. (Too bad most of the views don't let you see them close enough to truly appreciate them.) The players execute realistic headers, chest traps and kicks, and the goalies have an incredible range of saving techniques, knocking the ball away with their fists, fingertips and feet. The facial expressions of the players are a bit sour, and don't seem to change, but the skin and hair colors of the players match their real-life counterparts. (I think there's still room in FIFA 98 for more individual characteristics — I was disappointed, for example, when I played as

Colombia, and Valderrama didn't have his trademark huge flowing 'do.)

The one big feature that was missing in FIFA 96 is still missing in FIFA 97: the ability to create your own players. And FIFA 97 doesn't have the Major League Soccer license, so there aren't any teams from our country's most popular soccer league in 20 years. (Plus, it'd be hilarious to play a soccer game and control "Melrose Place" star Andrew "Billy" Shue, who plays on MLS' Los Angeles squad.)

Play it once and you have to agree: FIFA 97 is The King of soccer games. (Thank ya, thank ya verra much.) The graphics are fantastic, the sound effects and music are brilliant and the gameplay wonderfully captures the slow-paced rhythm and flow of the sport. It's the closest thing to soccer perfection that I've ever played.

Zach

THE BOTTOM LINE

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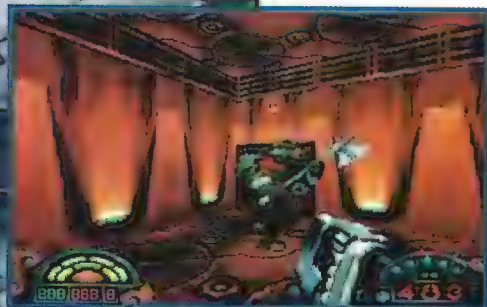
95%

GOLD

X

DARK FORCES

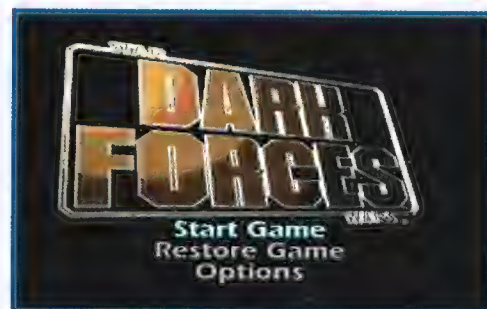
PUBLISHED BY LUCASARTS - DEVELOPED BY BIG BANG



Getting LucasArts' Dark Forces, for the PlayStation, was met with some mixed feelings on my part. For one, I had spent a lot of "quality" time with the PC version of the game last year (quality, meaning that a good week out of my life disappeared, molded into my chair in front of the PC, blasting away at Storm Troopers until my eyes felt they were turning into two tiny raisins). I emerged from that hazy period, feeling like a true Jedi Knight, just having enjoyed what I felt, was the coolest experience you could have with your PC. So you can see, I had high expectations. I could only hope that the PlayStation version could deliver the same experience.

Like most of my friends, the Star Wars trilogy has made quite an impact in my life. They were an amazing set of movies that were a lot more than just movies. And, getting the chance to actually role-play, as a member of the Rebel Alliance, in a first-person shooter, is probably every young adult male's dream. With this in mind, I felt LucasArts had a huge job in converting over the amazing PC version to the home console side. Let's see if they were up to the task.

For those of you that haven't played the PC version, the story is set in-between and around the same time period as the first set of movies. You play as Kyle Katarn, a Han Solo-type mer-

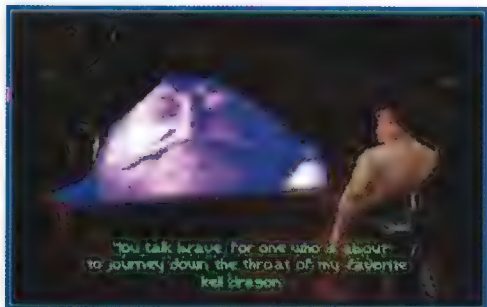


cenary/smuggler and one-time member of the Empire, who has converted over to the Rebel Alliance. Each of the game's 14 levels has you taking on different, specific, goal-oriented missions that uncover the Empire's latest plans for domination of the galaxy far, far away.

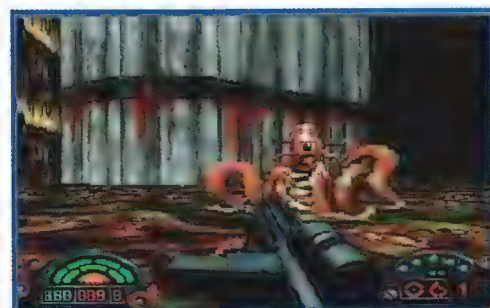
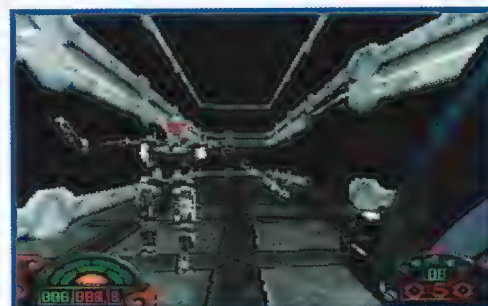
As far as gameplay goes, it does tend to borrow from the big-daddy of 3D shooters, Doom, in various ways, but also creates a lot of new features and elements that can't be found in that title. In addition to running down hallways, blasting at anything that moves, with an arsenal of weapons that would make your mama proud, (at least Ben's mom — I hear she wears combat boots) you can also jump, crawl, look up and down and set mines for unsuspecting Storm Troopers.

The control scheme, from PC to gamepad, has come across pretty well, with every button utilized in some way. There are only three different configurations to choose from, which is a little disappointing, since they're not all that different.

What really makes this game shine, is the well thought out level design and the amazing atmosphere. Each level is completely different in look and design from the last. From the Secret Base, where you'll blast your way through the Empire's Imperial Troops to steal the plans for the Death Star, to the Detention Center, where,



EXTRATED



are completely interactive, with morphing walls and floors, moving platforms and conveyors and plenty of cool shading and 3D lighting effects. The downside to all of this is that the graphic engine is looking a little dated, when compared to the newer crop of 3D shooters for the PlayStation such as *Disruptor* and *Alien Trilogy*, and the characters are unbelievably pixelated when you get too close to them. What's worse, (and my biggest complaint with the game) is that, in some instances, when there is a lot going on, the frame rate bogs down to an almost unacceptably slow pace.


The music and sound effects are incredible, with a completely overhauled soundtrack that would make John Williams proud. Again, it seems like the effects were sampled straight from the movie.

What it all boils down to is this: *Dark Forces* is an amazing first-person shooter that has one of THE best licenses ever. If you've played the PC version, there might be a little disappointment here as it's not nearly as smooth and is displayed in a lower resolution. If you haven't, you're in for a treat, as this is a great game. With that stated, *Dark Forces* gets close to a Gold, but ultimately misses the mark by just a bit and falls into the "high Silver" category because of its few shortcomings.

Greg

as in the movie, you have to wade through mashing trash compactors while avoiding sewer creatures to rescue a prisoner, to Jabba's Ship, where you're stripped of all your weapons and thrown into a pit with a nasty Kell Dragon, each one is a complete mission in itself and is a refreshing change from the "find the key and go to the exit" mindset. There are plenty of weapons and options in the game as well, including an overlaid, on-screen map and the ability to use special items for different circumstances such as a head lamp, infra-red goggles, ice cleats and an air mask.

The graphics in *Dark Forces* are both its strong and weak points. For one, everything is beautifully textured with graphics that could have been taken right from the movie sets. The environments, for the most part,



THE BOTTOM LINE

... If you've played the PC version, there might be a little disappointment here as it's not nearly as smooth and is displayed in a lower resolution. If you haven't, you're in for a treat, as this is a great game. With that stated, *Dark Forces* gets close to a Gold, but ultimately misses the mark by just a bit and falls into the "high Silver" category because of its few shortcomings.

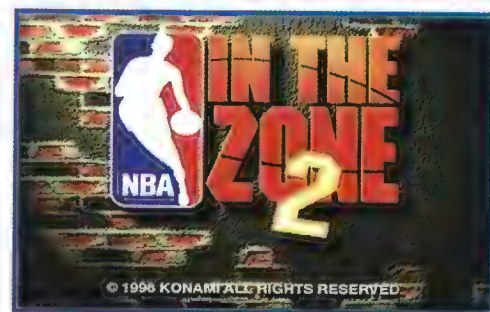
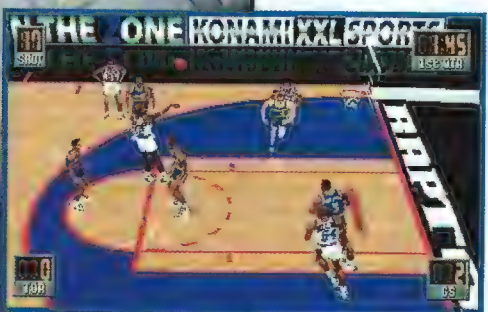
87%

SILVER

X

IN THE ZONE 2

PUBLISHED AND DEVELOPED BY KONAMI

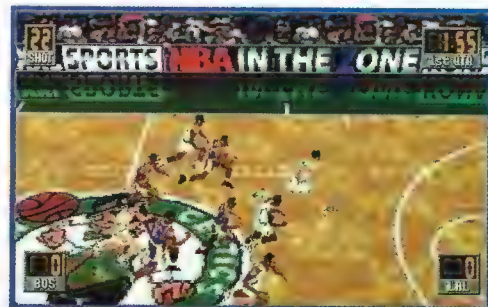


There are a number of "little" things that keep Konami's NBA In the Zone 2 from being the best SIMULATION of life in the NBA, on the PlayStation. But there's absolutely nothing that keeps it from being the best looking and playing game of hoop that I have yet to enjoy.

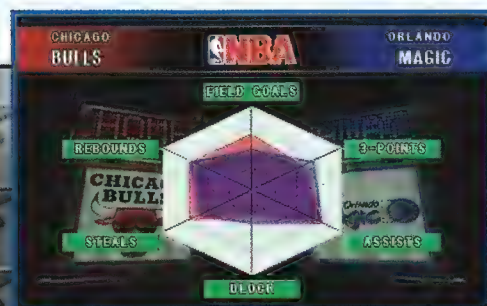
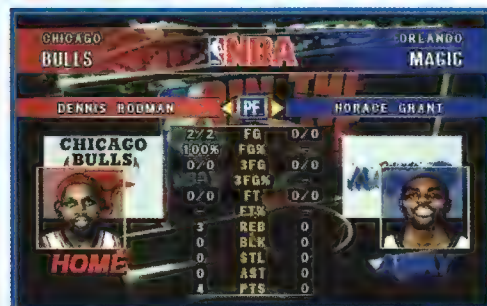
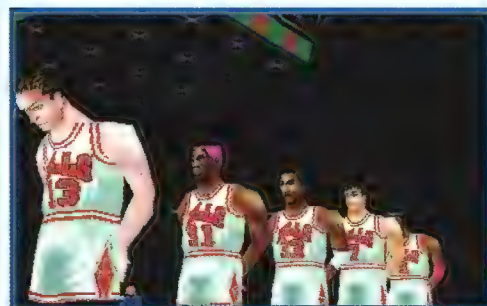
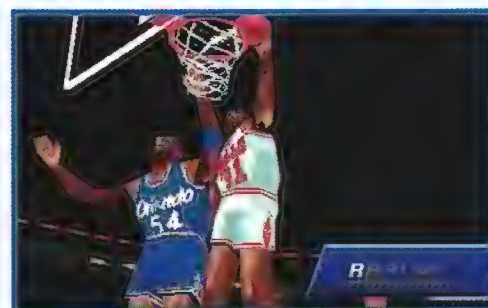
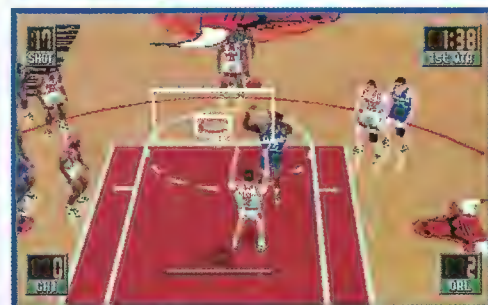
I thought the original game was okay. You know, one of those games that gets high marks for its technology with so-so gameplay — the kind of game you expect to see when a new system is first launched. The new one kills it dead. Presented in the PS's high-resolution mode, Zone 2 gives the player the most realistic, detailed animation ever presented in a sports game, and does it with gameplay that is every bit as smooth as the graphics are detailed. Zone 2 allows the player to take control over calling for screens and player movement — not through a stoppage of play, but by using the shoulder pads to move the players around the key. You can use quick speed bursts that, on offense, will help you break loose from your man after a head fake or, on defense, that will attack the player with the ball and have you stabbing for the steal. Switching between active players is easy and intuitive and there are a number of improvements over gameplay engines in competing products that should also be noted. For example: in Sony's NBA Shootout, while the high-

res graphics were beautiful, the player animation was limited — to the point where, when you went to block a shot, you couldn't move your player laterally; he would simply jump straight up and down ... No problem in Zone 2, players move fluidly and will attack at the point of release. Just like in Konami's classic 8-bit game, Double Dribble, shot blocking becomes one of the most enjoyable aspects of the game, especially in two-player mode. Another example: In EA Sports' NBA Live 97 (see Eric's review elsewhere in this issue), they have gone to polygon players, but the trade-off seems to be one of slower gameplay speed and sloppy play control... no such problem with Konami's polygons — the players move with almost pin-point (for a polygon-based game) precision and the gameplay speed is quick, to the point of feeling the impact of the break or a lead change.

Graphically, this game is, along with EA's NHL 97, the best looking sports game on the market, with details that include team logo's, player names, jersey numbers and faces that, remarkably enough, kinda-sorta look like the real players. In addition, the game features four different camera angles that are all pretty playable (the 'Live' and 'Normal' being the best of the group), and a great, close-up instant replay feature that can be toggled on, off or only used with



EXTRATED



computer chosen highlights.

Where ZONE 2 stumbles, is on the simulation side of things. The game, while offering season play, keeps no statistical database for the season — no league leaders, team stats, nothing, nada, zilch — except for won-loss records and standings. On the positive side, the game does offer full rosters and substitutions (unlike last year's model) and the players do the things you expect them to do — Pippen has an incredible array of dunks and Stockton and Hornacek can't. In fact, this one limitation did more to sell me on the product than anything else. You will marvel at the variety of moves that your players can perform — all based on court position, location of the nearest defender and the physical skills or limitations of your active

player. One small example: You pass the ball to Pippen at the wing, up-fake your man into the air, speed burst around him, baseline, and finish with a behind the rim scoop dunk ... awesome! There are more of these combinations than I have been able to count; but, I can assure you that the variety will keep you visually entertained.

My last comment is that, as in the original game, Zone 2 is arcade play first, with an emphasis played on dunk-fest kind of action — although not as much as in the first game. It is fast, it is pretty, and it plays like a champion. Although its score drops a few notches (keeping it from achieving our new Platinum status) because of its lack of a dedicated season simulation feature, NBA In the Zone 2 stands as the best, most playable game of PlayStation basketball to date.

Dave



THE BOTTOM LINE

Konami's NBA In The Zone 2 is fast, pretty and it plays like a champion. Although its score drops a few notches (keeping it from achieving our new Platinum status) because of its lack of a dedicated season simulation feature, NBA In the Zone 2 stands as the best, most playable game of PlayStation basketball to date.



SUIKODEN

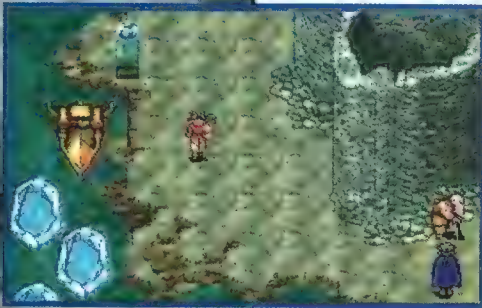
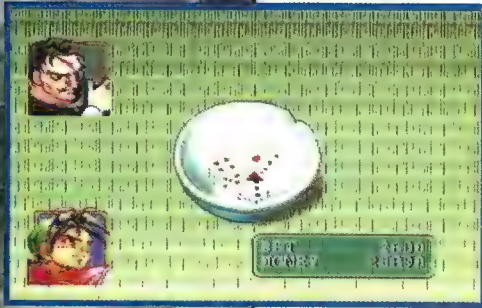
PUBLISHED AND DEVELOPED BY KONAMI

If you have been waiting for a decent RPG for the PlayStation, your patience has paid off. This Christmas season, Konami plans to release Suikoden, their first RPG. You may know Konami for such hits as Contra: Legacy of War, and/or International Track and Field — both excellent titles. Now, many people may be holding off on another RPG purchase for Final Fantasy 7, myself included, but Suikoden just asks to be bought. “The review please!”

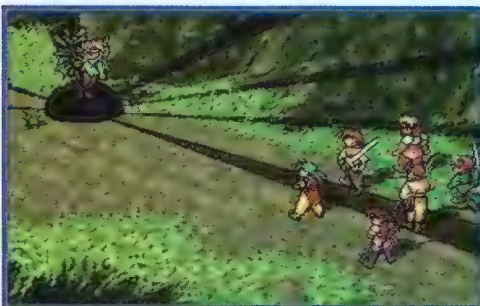
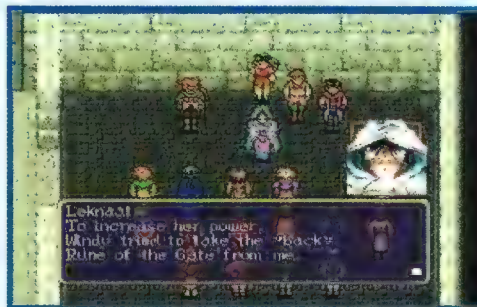
Gameplay in Suikoden greatly mimics that of the old-school Final Fantasy games. Control is very simple and self explanatory, and you are sure not to get confused while tooling around in the menus. Another general observation is that the story is very well thought out. It is easy to follow, yet intriguing enough to keep you playing for hours on end. Basically, you play as the son of a great war general, and it is your mission to restore peace to an evil-ridden land. The task at hand is not so easy, once you discover that even your closest friends are against you. You will be forced to use your wits, courage, and

other various traits your mother may have passed on to you.

The best feature of Suikoden is the huge amount of characters who join your entourage during your quest. The present count totals 108 (that's a lot of characters if you ask me). Each character uses a different type of attack and/or magic and helps you during your travels. Finding each character is relatively easy, you might find a magician in a bar, a knight in the town hall, or even a ninja in a dragon knight's den. Recruiting them for your cause, however, is a different thing entirely. Many times you must bribe characters, or do something for them, before they will fight on your side. Another interesting feature is the added strategy aspect. Numerous times during your journey, you have to control huge armies and engage in epic battles between upwards of 30,000 soldiers (yes, thirty-thousand). This is no simple assignment, as sometimes whole ranks of troops get slaughtered in the all-out slug-O-thon. My personal favorite characteristic of Suikoden is that you have the ability to make different things happen along your



EXTRATED



way. Many times you will be asked to make a choice on what to do, or where to go next. This greatly adds to the uniqueness of your own personal trek.

Now, visually the graphics in Suikoden are a bit average. They do definitely get the point across, but, to me, seem like something other than PlayStation graphics. I would say they are a bit too 16-bitish, if you catch my drift. Many times, I found myself looking at the screen thinking, "hmm, what is that supposed to be?" Overall though, they are quite acceptable. The audio was no let-down. Excellent music fit very well with each scene and always

reflected the atmosphere

of the gameplay. The sound effects were also well done. Konami really put a lot of effort into making this a noteworthy title, even for those of you waiting for FF7.

Final Thought: Well, this is a game for all RPG fans. You are sure to get your money's worth with Suikoden — a choose-your-own-adventure style RPG which combines Strategy/Exploration and Adventure — all splendidly in one easy-to-handle package (now that was a long sentence!) I highly recommend Suikoden to anyone who enjoys spending hours with a PlayStation controller in hand.

Ben



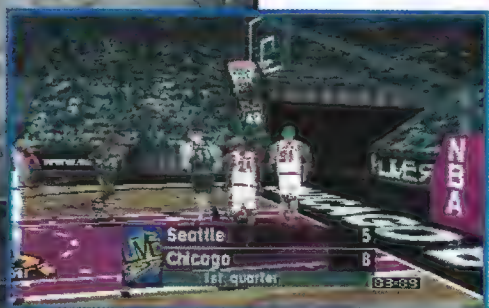
THE BOTTOM LINE

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NBA LIVE 97

PUBLISHED BY EA SPORTS - DEVELOPED BY EA CANADA



Somebody pass the No-Doze please. Ok, then, how about a can of Jolt? I'm going to need something quick if I'm going to continue to write this article and play the latest basketball offering from EA Sports at the same time. NO, no, no — not that my writing puts me to sleep (maybe some of you, but definitely not ME), but man, I thought NHL '97 was slow. I guess there is a gear lower than LOW. Get out the turtles, Earl, 'cause we gonna have us a race!

Somebody tell me why polygon characters have to depict the athletes on screen? Fighting games? Sure, gotta be polygon. Third person adventure? Sure, polygon works well there, too. But sports games? Not yet. Not until somebody can put some juice into the motion. As you may recall from last month's review of NHL '97, the characters looked colorful and well defined, but they moved as if they were attached to the ends of a table hockey stick; kind of suspended in animation, spinning 360 degrees on "air." Well, take that same theme and put baggy shorts and

tank tops on the players, and you've got personality. What? Personality. Oh, sorry, I've gone off into song again — what you've got is the same problems that plague NHL '97. It's a shame, really, because EA finally got the multiple camera angles right. Almost all of the possible viewing angles can be used to actually play the game without hindering the performance. This is quite an accomplishment but, unfortunately, its relevance has to take a back seat to the plethora of poor game dynamics.

Let's start with the incredibly slow disk access time. From there we can move to the choppy backgrounds that tend to disappear, as players move about. How about the missing, or a complete lack of, backboard on free throws? How about the AI that gives you two free throws after being fouled, and making the basket? How about trading players, say a starting guard for a starting center? Well, the starting center you just got is now playing point guard because the computer automatically sticks him in the slot vacated by your previous player. No big deal, just make



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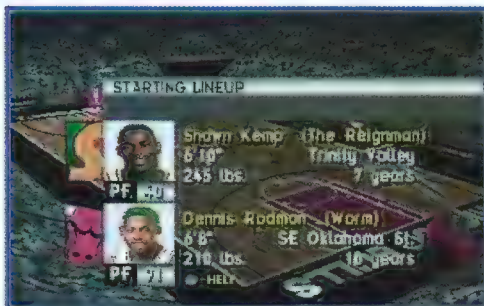
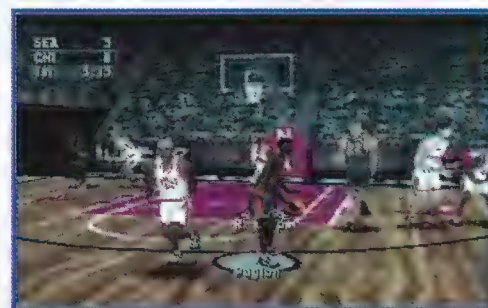


top players

rank	player	team	pts	reb	ast	blk	stl	pts
1	O. Johnson	UTA	15.9					438
2	M. Johnson	UTA	14.8					437
3	K. Johnson	UTA	14.8					427
4	S. D'Neel	UTA	14.7					456
5	P. Jones	UTA	14.0					461
6	G. Hill	UTA	9.9					458

exhibition

Seattle Sonics	Chicago Bulls
1st	1st
2nd	1st
3rd	1st
4th	1st
5th	1st
6th	1st
7th	1st
8th	1st
9th	1st
10th	1st



a sub before every tip-off! Rebounding? Lots of luck, Chuck, because there's no telling where the ball is, in relation to your players. The majority of missed shots land on the ground — not a good thing. Of course, after your on-screen John Stockton runs down the ball, he will more than likely go out of bounds, as the little polygon dude just kind of keeps "skating" on by. For crying out loud, can't we make it so the players can stop on a dime, or even a half dollar? Is that so much to ask? And what's up with the player bouncing the ball seven to ten times before he shoots a free-throw? It's not as if the quarters don't go buy slowly

enough, but then we get to watch Jon Koncak dribble off his knee for two minutes! And then there's the low scoring quarters, mainly because the computer has to pass the ball 77 times before it shoots. And yes, you can pass the ball 77 times before the 24 "second" clock expires.

I can't say there's nothing in NBA Live '97 to praise, because the tip jams and the instant replay are both worthy of being in any basketball title. But, that's about it! You'll definitely want to rent this one first — and if you don't, then it's probably because you don't need any help getting to sleep. Ouch.

Eric

X

THE BOTTOM LINE

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74%

X

2XTREME

PUBLISHED AND DEVELOPED BY SONY

I was a HUGE fan of the original ESPN Extreme Games. The game graced the very first issue of PSExtreme (back when it was called Dimension PS-X) and, along with Ridge Racer, was one of the two best technology showcases that the PlayStation had at launch. Not merely a bunch of pretty pictures, the game took the theme and gameplay pioneered by Electronic Arts' Road Rash series and gave it more moves, more technique and, in general, more gameplay. The game went on to become one of the PlayStation's best selling titles to date.

A little more than a year after the PlayStation debuted in North America, Sony has delivered the sequel — 2Xtreme. In the interest of going right to the heart of the matter, 2Xtreme does some things better than the original, and some things — not as well. The first thing fans will notice is that the game is faster (running at 30 frames per second) and that the rules have been changed. In the original, there were 16 racers competing for finishing place and points — achieved by going through gates and knocking down opponents. The problem with that system,

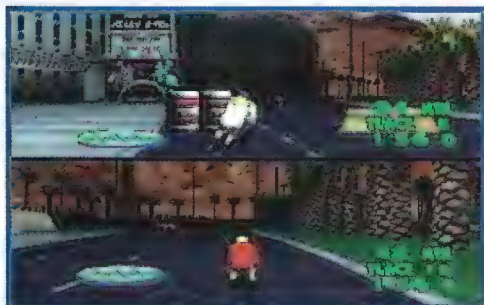
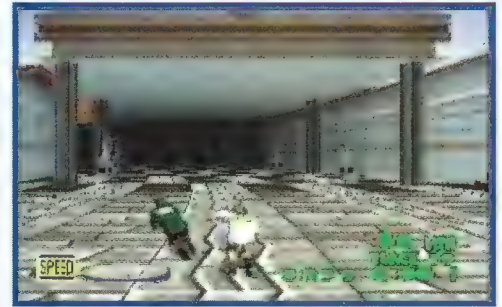


however, was that you could finish 10th in the race, and still manage to place 1st, as a result of your gate and knockdown points. In the sequel, the system is more balanced and racing is emphasized over combat ... some fans of the original will like this change, some won't.

Also new to this year's game is the fact that you no longer have control over equipment. Each race (there are 12 in all — three different sections in Japan (snow boarding), Los Angeles (skateboard), Africa (mountain bike) and Las Vegas (in-line skates) features a specific piece of equipment — missing from the original is the dreaded street luge. (Although, I must admit to the peculiar pleasure of turning these annoying sods into long skid marks!) In addition, the game allows you to create and customize your own player and offers a number of power-up gates (similar in principle to Sony's own Motor Toon Grand Prix) that will help you in your quest to earn trick points. Tricks are accomplished through three different button combinations while in flight (2, 3, and 4 button combo's), with each carrying a greater point award than the last. (The trick button combo's are the same on all



EX RATED



equipment.)

In essence, the game's design team has focused on re-vamping the gameplay experience while tweaking with the graphic presentation. Yes, the game is faster, but the tracks aren't as good looking as those found in the original. San Francisco, Italy, South America and Lake Tahoe were all better looking than the new courses. This problem is partially the result of including landmarks in 2Xtreme that are repeated over and over again — kind of like an episode of the Flintstones. Las Vegas is particularly noticeable, with the same Strip hotels cycling by over and over again. The players are better animated, but there are only 10 of

them, and they are pix-L-ly! The gameplay is more even-handed, but missing is some of the flexibility and variety that last year's game delivered simply by letting the player choose his own equipment. The tricks are very cool, but kicking was lost in favor of them — so you go forward two steps and back one. Gameplay now emphasizes racing, so combat is not nearly as important, or as frequent. Some will like this and some won't.

In the end, I have to say that I am a little disappointed in 2Xtreme. Although it will end up being an issue of personal preference, for me, I'll take the original game over the sequel. 2Xtreme is a solid game, but technology has passed it by, graphically, in the past year and the game LOOKED better last year. And, I'm not convinced that it PLAYS better this year. So, the "bottom line" is that, while 2Xtreme follows the path set by its older brother, it strays from time to time. Whether or not you find it to be better than the original is going to depend on what you enjoyed about the first game. 2Xtreme remains fun to play, but I'll pull the original off of the shelf, then the sequel.

Dave



THE BOTTOM LINE

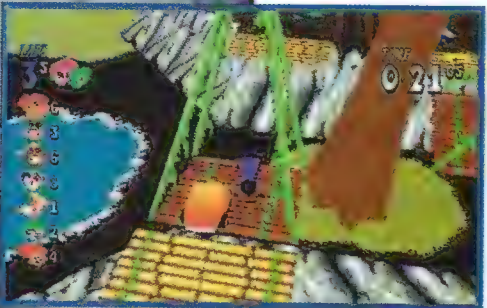
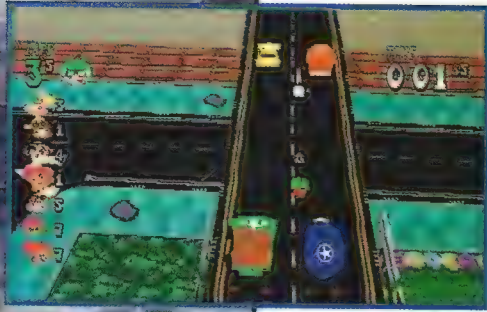
For the most part, you've had this experience before. If it weren't for the addition of a snow boarding event, the game would strictly be rental only. As it is, the only reason to purchase 2 Extreme would be if you couldn't get your hands on the original and just had to have a snow boarding game.

82%



DARE DEVIL DERBY 3D

PUBLISHED BY MINDSCAPE - DEVELOPED BY SUPERSONIC



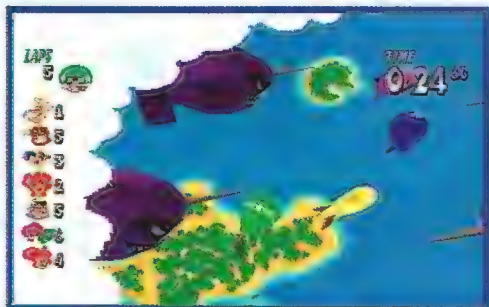
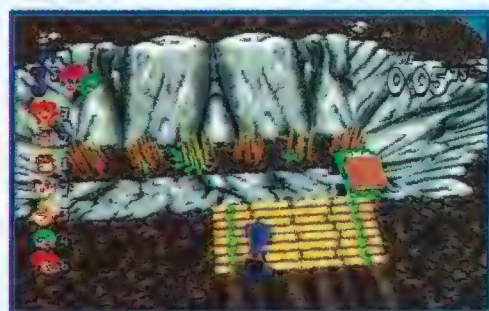
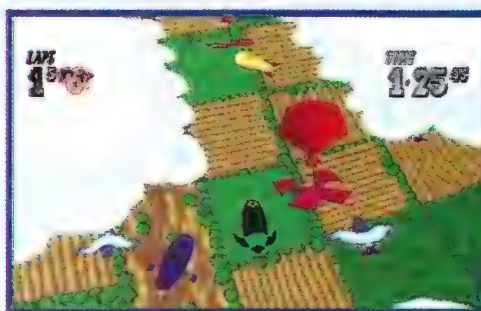
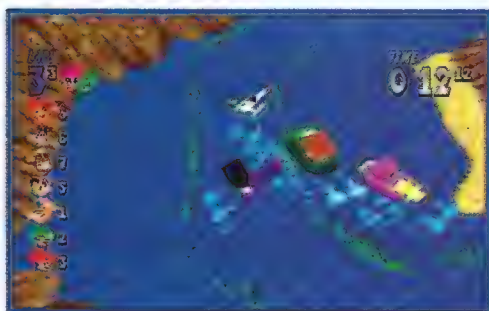
with eight tiny cars (or blimps or submarines or something else, depending on the setting) racing around very curvy tracks that take a bunch of races to memorize. There are no power-ups, no skid turns, and no pits; you can steer left or right and speed up or slow down, and that's it. Each of the game's dozens of tracks has an abundance of hairpin turns and a couple of cleverly disguised shortcuts to cut down your times. There are two viewpoints: a multiplayer top-down view that stays locked in place as the cars drive, or a single-player viewpoint that keeps the vehicle centered on the screen, rotating the track as you turn.

There's no split-screen mode, so how does Dare Devil Derby handle multiple players? In some modes, whenever one player leaves the rest of the racers so far behind that they're off the screen, he's awarded a point, and the other player is brought back onto the screen for a restart. (The first player to get a dozen points in these modes wins.) In other modes, the screen scales out to show more of the track — to the point where you can race an entire lap while your opponent is still at the starting line (I tried it).

Dare Devil Derby has a very impressive, six one-player modes, and I'd be a foolish lad if I didn't tell you about all of 'em. Grand Prix: A series of races in which you have to finish in the top three of each race to advance to the next race. World Series: A series of races in which the competitors are award-



EXTRATED



ed points after each race, in order of finish, so that first place get eight points and eighth place gets one. Championship: A tournament where the eight racers are divided up into two-vehicle matches, narrowing down to a single champion. (You can watch the computer cars race or simply skip to your own.) Knockout: The last-place finisher is eliminated after each race, because, as anyone who saw Highlander knows, there can be only one. One on One: You against one of the other racers. Beat him/her/it and move on; lose and it's all over. Speed Trial: Clock your best solo lap time on any of the game's tracks for other players to marvel at and attempt to crush. The multiplayer modes are mostly variations on the solo modes, except for the Speed Trial, where you race against "ghost cars" — recorded performances of whomever's raced before you.

The graphics are average, although some of the tracks have neat touches: one race has you driving through haunted mansions, while another has you driving into the mouth of a whale and getting spouted out his blowhole. (The hole on top, you sicko.) The sound effects are sparse and the bouncy music is well-suited to each level.

The huge number of modes and tracks give Dare Devil Derby 3D lots of longevity, as does the ability to have up to eight human players at once (if you're rich enough to have two Multi-Taps and a boatload of controllers). It's a bit frustrating at times — especially on the more difficult tracks, when you're careening off cliffs and smashing into obstacles as if you have the blood alcohol level of Robert Downey Jr. — but it's still a great multiplayer racing game.

Zach

X

THE BOTTOM LINE

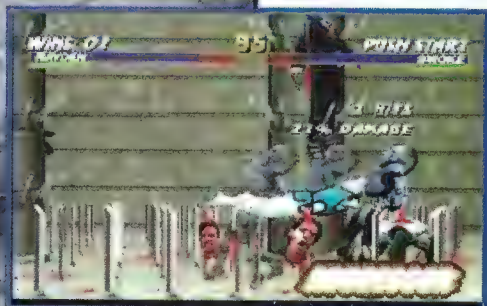
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81%

SILVER X

MORTAL KOMBAT TRILOGY

PUBLISHED BY WILLIAMS/MIDWAY - DEVELOPED BY AVALANCHE



What a goofy, yet brilliant, idea: bringing together an unbelievable 32 playable characters (and four "classic" characters) from the trio of Mortal Kombat games and sticking them into the well-tuned game engine of Mortal Kombat 3. That's the idea behind Mortal Kombat Trilogy, which manages to squeeze a little more juice out of Midway's biggest gaming property.

Here's the MK Trilogy roll call of playable characters, in alphabetical order (take a deep breath): Baraka, Cyrax, Ermac, Human Smoke, Jade, Jax, Johnny Cage, Goro, Kabal, Kano, Kintaro, Kitana, Kung Lao, Liu Kang, Masked Sub-Zero, Mileena, Motaro, Nightwolf, Noob Saibot, Rain, Rayden, Reptile, Robot Smoke, Scorpion, Sektor, Shang Tsung, Shao Kahn, Sheeva, Sindel, Sonya, Stryker, and Sub-Zero. (The classic characters: MK2 Jax, MK1 Kano, MK2 Kung Lao, and MK1 Rayden.) The characters from MK1 and MK2 have been given combos for the spiffy MK3 engine, and the programmers have given thirty new moves and "-Alities" to the various combatants. (That's a total of thirty moves, not

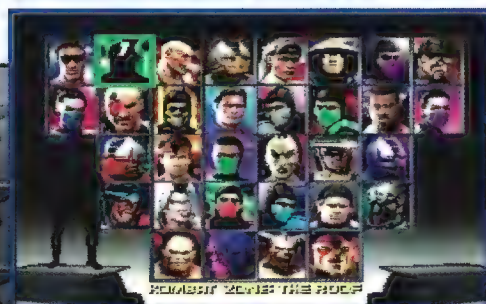
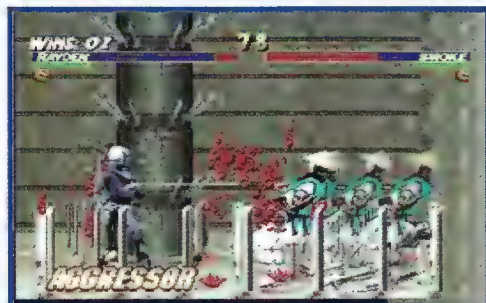
thirty new moves for each character.) The Johnny Cage in MK Trilogy isn't the same Johnny Cage as in MK1 and MK2; that actor, Daniel Pesina, is involved in a legal dispute with Midway. Avalanche brought in a new actor, Chris Alexander, to film Cage's moves in a slightly different outfit. (It's even weirder than the two Darrens on Bewitched.) I have the feeling that you can make those classic characters into playable ones, and I have the feeling that there are yet MORE hidden characters in MK Trilogy.

Avalanche has made two major additions to MK3's engine. The first is the Aggressor Mode, in which an "Aggressor Bar" fills up at the bottom of the screen as you throw punches and kicks; when the bar is full, you can pull off more damaging moves and combos. The second major addition is Brutalities, a new "-Ality" that lets the winner pummel the loser so rapidly that he explodes. Of course, the Brutalities just use existing frames of animation, so they aren't visually exciting in the slightest.

If you've played MK3, you know almost exactly how MK Trilogy looks and plays; the controls and backgrounds



EXTRATED



are the same (several backgrounds from MK2 are also included). There are three modes to choose from. Mortal Kombat is one-on-one fighting. 2 on 2 Kombat lets each player choose two characters; when one character dies in the match, the second character appears. 8 Player Kombat is a tournament where each player chooses his own character. There's also a huge option menu that lets you tweak various aspects of the game. (To select the "?" box at the options, press and hold the L1, L2, R1, and R2 buttons, then press and hold Up until you hear a crash. The "?" options let you activate such nifty effects as one-button "-Alities.")

MK Trilogy's biggest drawback is the LONG loading times. After playing a match of Mortal Kombat, the game reloads the main menu, then reloads the character-select screen, then reloads the matchup screen ... it takes a minimum of thirty seconds to go from one match to the next. Extremely tedious, and not for the impatient. And, yes, Shang Tsung is still an essentially useless character

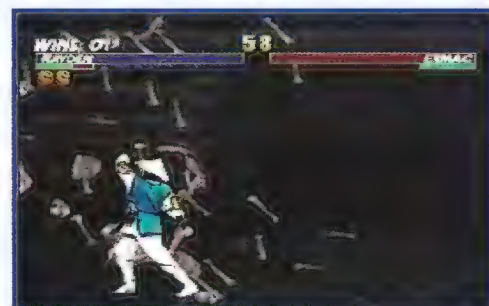
because of the excruciating

loading time when he morphs.

The graphics are good, but vary in quality; the MK2 characters and backgrounds are noticeably rougher than the MK3 characters and backgrounds, and the non-MK3 characters have slightly fewer frames of animation, especially the bosses. The new Brutalities and most of the new moves just use existing animation frames, so there's very little "new" to see except the new Johnny Cage. The sound effects and music are pretty much arcade-perfect.

Mortal Kombat Trilogy is a very cool idea, and a great technical accomplishment, but it's still an aging fighting-game engine that looks (and plays) more two-dimensionally all the time. If you love the Mortal Kombat series, or you're just blown away by a fighting game with so many damn characters — keeping in mind that many of them are look-alike "clones" — buy MK Trilogy. If you're more interested in a great 2D fighting game, period, pick up Street Fighter Alpha 2, which has flawless gameplay and no silly gore.

Zach



THE BOTTOM LINE

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83%



KING'S FIELD II

PUBLISHED BY ASCII ENTERTAINMENT - DEVELOPED BY FROM SOFTWARE

Here it is, not even a year later, and we are graced with another fine King's Field RPG. ASCII's second installment, King's Field II (which is actually King's Field III in Japan — since the original was never released in America) lives up to, and surpasses, its predecessor with a lot more of the same qualities that made the first so successful, as well as adding a dose of new options, features and graphic upgrades that make it a worthy sequel.

For starters, the storyline takes place fifteen years after the first King's Field. This time around, you control Prince Lyle, the son of the King of Verdite who has succumbed to a great evil. You have been given the charge of obtaining four magical powers that have been entrusted to four Archmages which, in turn, will allow you to break the seal placed on the castle, gain entrance into Alexander's tomb (the hero from the first King's Field, who gave his life and soul to seal the evil King inside the castle) where the Moonlight Sword awaits and, eventually, confront your evil father to fulfill your destiny. This is definitely a bit of a generalization on my part, as there are many plot twists and sub-quests along the way, which make this a very deep and involving RPG.

So, let's talk improvements. The graphic engine has been completely overhauled. Textures are more colorful, smoother and a lot less pixely when you get up close and personal. There are also all sorts of



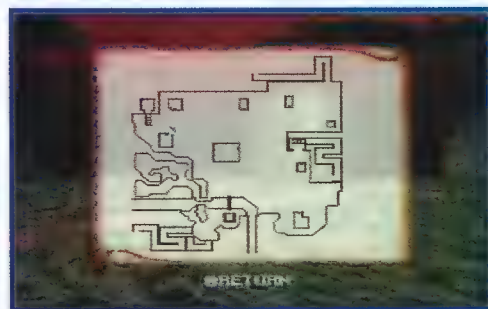
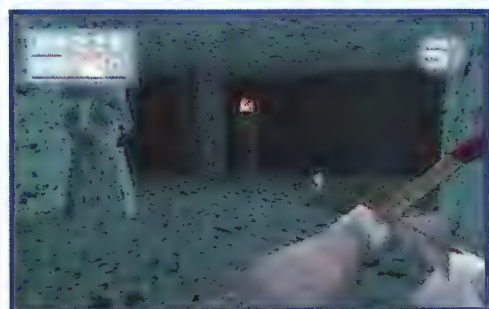
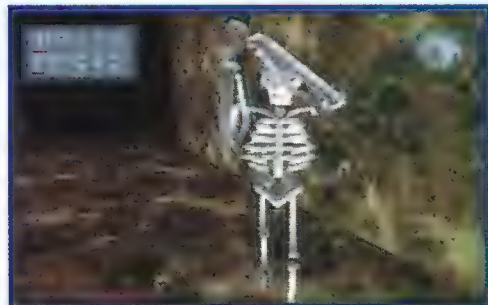
new magical special effects such as transparencies, smoke, fire and morphing. The levels themselves feel immense, giving a much wider scope and immersive feel to the game than the last — almost to the point where you feel lost. To counteract this, the developers have included a much-needed auto map (you have to find it first), which charts everywhere you go.

The dialog has been enhanced as well, making the story a big part of the game. Like any good RPG, it is important to speak with just about everyone you encounter, sometimes more than once. What's been added to this version is the storage option, which records every important conversation you have with the world's various inhabitants and then allows you to go back and re-read them at your discretion. There's nothing worse than being told exactly where to go in order to find a certain item, then later trying to remember what they had said.

There are a few things about the game that I thought could have been improved upon. The first is the slow pace of the game. Fighting is done in real-time, and I understand this, but it can be a tad frustrating, during combat, to take a swipe at a monster with your broadsword then have to wait a few seconds for your energy meter to replenish before you can do it again. In addition to this, if you use the "run" button to speed things up, you temporarily lose all of your energy and magical abilities. Once or



EXTRATED



twice I came hightailing it around a corner only to find a nasty skeleton waiting for me on the other side. I couldn't spring into action for at least three seconds while my energy recharged. Meanwhile, he proceeded to pummel me into oblivion. My last and only complaint is the non-ability to save your game at any point. Like the first King's Field, you can only save at special save beacons, which are interspersed (far and few between) throughout the game. Maybe it's just me, but I found that I did a lot of dying, which meant a lot of doing the same things over and over until I could get to the next save point. In any event, these are small annoyances when you look at the whole package.

Last year, King's Field had a pretty open market when it came to RPGs for the PlayStation. This year, things are a little different

with a wider selection to choose from, which include Sony's recent release of *Beyond the Beyond* and the upcoming releases of Konami's *Suikoden* (see review in this issue) and Atlus' *Persona*. What King's Field offers, that these games don't, is a totally different RPG experience from a first-person point of view — making for a much more realistic experience.

King's Field II is a great game, even more involving than the first (which received our illustrious "Gold X" rating of 95% way back in issue 4) and has enough improvements as well as a great story to make it worthy of your purchase. This year's 90% is on par with last year's 95%, as the bar has been raised by the number of quality PlayStation titles released in '96. With that said, if you loved the first one, you'll find even more to love in this more than worthy sequel.

Greg



THE BOTTOM LINE

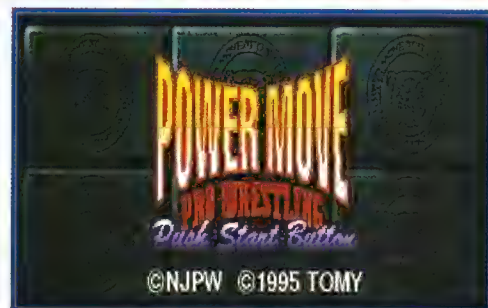
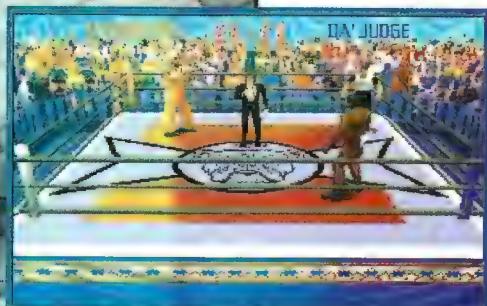
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90%



POWER MOVE PRO WRESTLING

PUBLISHED BY ACTIVISION AND DEVELOPED BY TOMY



For some odd reason, wrestling games hold a special place in my gaming memories. Since the very first wrestling games appeared, many years ago, I always made it a point to play as many of them as possible. Well, my freinds, I have finally come across the best of them all: Power Move Wrestling, by (who? Tomy?), ported over to Amercian systems by Activision, and heading to a PlayStation near you. Ladies and Gentlemen, "Let's get ready to RUMBLE!"

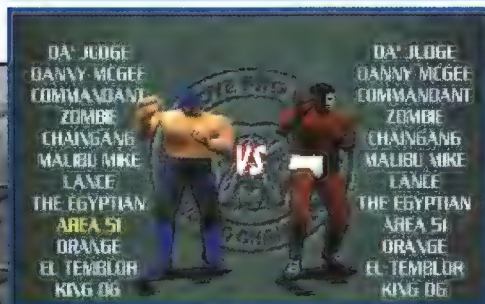
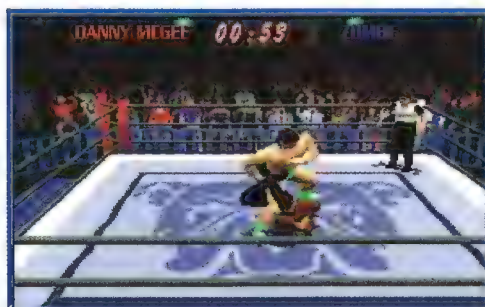
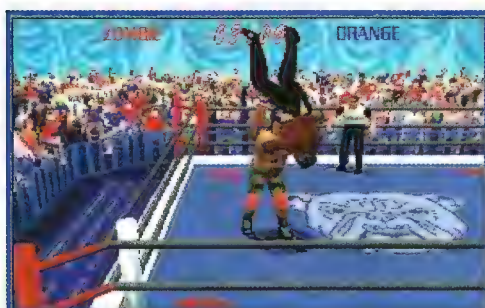
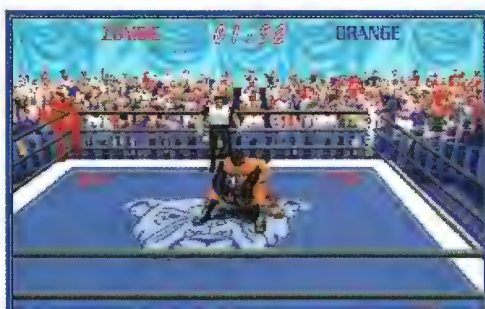
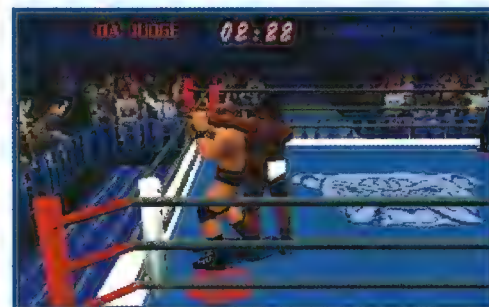
You are probably asking yourself, "so what makes this game so special anyway?", Lemme tell you about it. First of all, you get a bunch of characters, all with their own personal wrestling syle and personality. In addition to the regular characters, there are also four secret characters which are accesable via codes. What about gameplay modes? Well, with the exception of a Tag Team option, there is just about every mode imaginable: Single Play; Vs Play; Tournament Play; and Season. Add to that a completely customizable Options mode, and you have yourself a bonna-fide reason for locking yourself in your house and never com-

ing out. In the Options mode, you can pick what arena you wish to battle in, time limit, difficulty, and even match type, just to name a few.

Now the intracacies and small details of Power Move Wrestling are what sets this apart from "other" games of the same genre. Everything down to the simplest detail was included. Crowds cheering for the good guys, a hilarious announcer who introduces each character, a crazy referee who floats around the ring like a Foot Locker employee on crack. You can even taunt with your character and the crowd reacts to it! I think the most outstanding feature of the game is the way in which you perform moves. First, you must gain advantage, then with different button/d-pad presses, you execute a powerful move to take your opponent out. If you pound on your opponent enough, you might get them dizzy, then you can perform special dizzy only moves, which are a real crowd pleaser! Another good feature is the "rage" system. When a character is getting beat down by his opponent (kinda like how I do Greg in Racketball), his name will begin to glow. This signifies that he now has the abili-



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ty to perform a "rage-only" maneuver. These moves are simply amazing to see, as well as to receive. Of course, being the great game it is, you can even throw your opponent out of the ring, jump off the turn buckle (that's the pad thing in the corner, you know, that thing George the Animal Steele always ate), then slam them into the ring post. That makes me cringe.

Now, the graphics. Power Move is flat out awesome in this category. Each character is motion captured and animation flows extremely smooth during all parts of the game. A full crowd was implemented and the rings look superb as well.

The sound falls a little

short, as many of the sound effects are a bit dull. Also, sometimes it seems as if the sounds were coming from a distance. In all actuality, it isn't that noticable, but is IS my job to find these things (or so I am told). Overall, Power Move is a beautiful looking bundle of action.

Da' Lowdown: Well, what more can I say? This is the pinnacle of wrestling games. Awesome digitized characters, precise control, tons of gameplay modes; this game is just plain fun! If you are one of the many who enjoys a great wrestling game, then this is a purchase you should highly consider. Contgrats to Activision for picking up this package of fun!

Ben



THE BOTTOM LINE

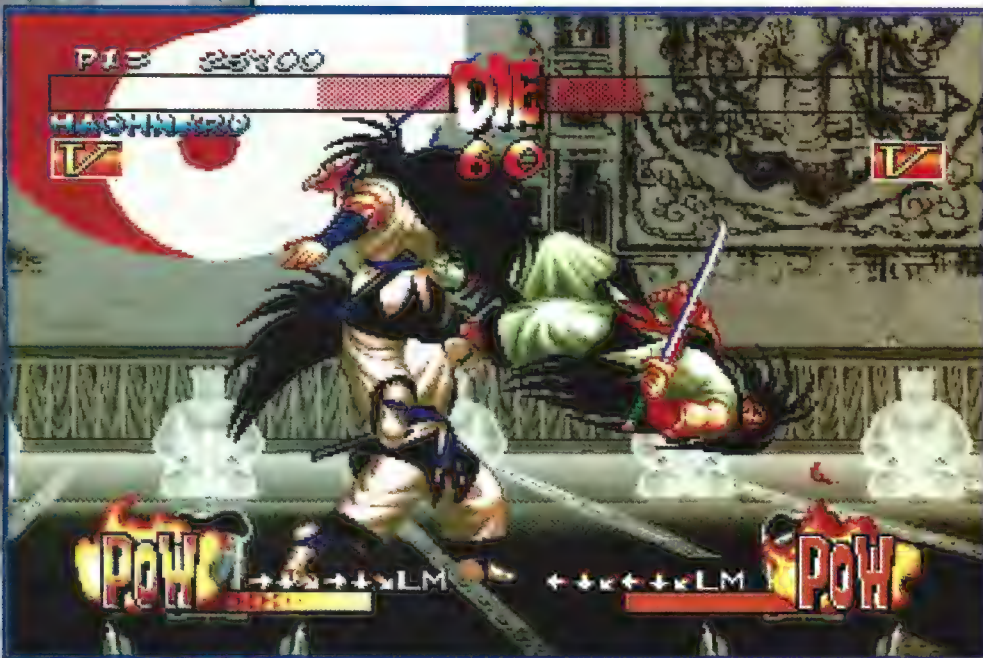
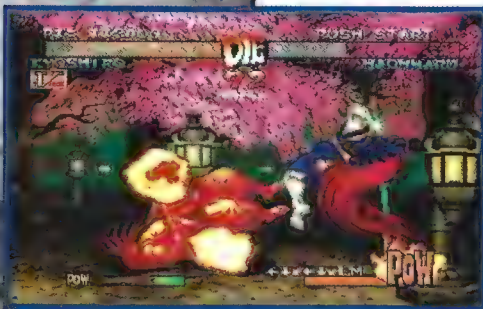
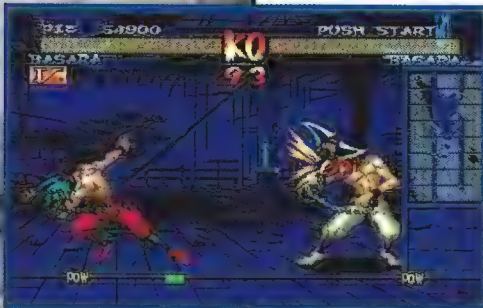
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91%



SAMURAI SHODOWN III

PUBLISHED BY SONY - DEVELOPED BY SNK



This is the second of three planned SNK translations from the arcades to the PlayStation; the disappointing King of Fighters '95 was the first, and Real Bout Fatal Fury is the last. But if these first two translations are anything to go by, Real Bout's going to be real lame; Samurai Shodown 3 tries and fails to capture the limited appeal of the coin-op. Limited appeal? Well, yes, y'see, the Samurai Shodown series has always had a very Japanese flavor. The graphics, characters and sound effects are minimally translated and much more likely to appeal to an anime freak than a normal (if there is such a thing) video game player. I mean, show me another fighting game with characters bearing such ethnic names as Shizumaru Hisame, Gaira Caffein, and Shiro Tokisada Amakusa, and I'll give you all my PlayStation games. (Well, no, I won't really. Just trying to be dramatic.)

Samurai Shodown III has 12 characters, all of them bearing weapons of some sort, but it's kinda-sorta 24 characters. How's that, you ask? After choosing a character, you choose your

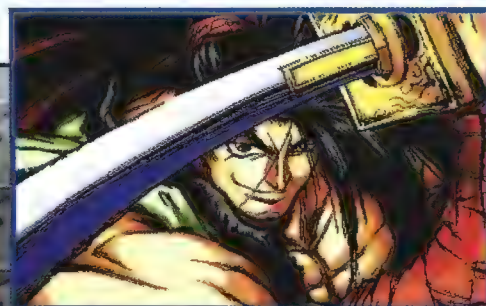
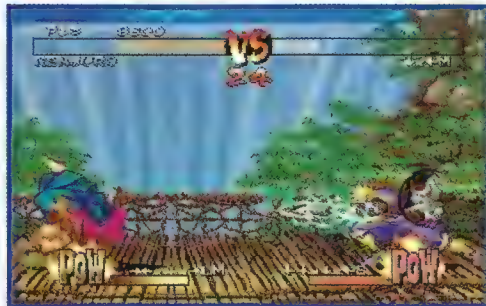
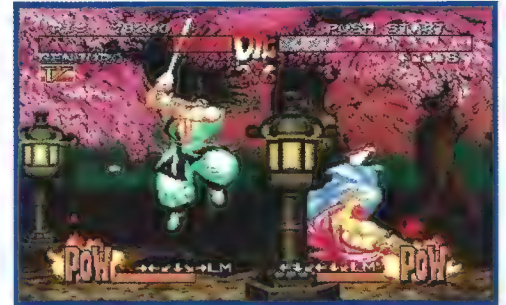
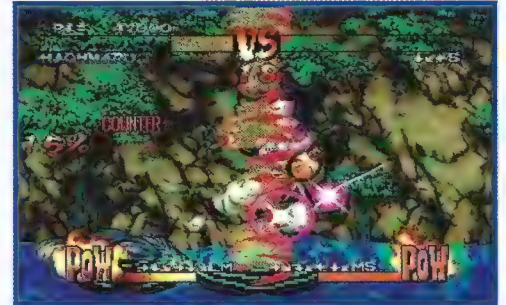
"technique": Slash or Bust. Slash is the kind, gentle, heroic version of the character; Bust is the mean, nasty, evil version. The two versions of the characters look only slightly different, but the special moves are almost COMPLETELY different.

Once you've chosen good or evil, you then choose one of three skill levels; each player can choose a separate level. The Upper Level keeps your Desperation special move powered up for the duration of the fight, but prevents you from blocking — a risky trade-off, indeed. The Medium Level is the default level, with the Desperation move charging at the normal rate. The Lower Level gives you five auto-blocks where the computer deflects an incoming blow, but the Desperation move charges at a slower rate.

Throws are a bit different in Shodown III compared to other fighting games; instead of tossing your foe onto the ground, you flip him and leave him temporarily open to a special-move attack. Blocks are done with the control pad instead of a button. Counter moves are allowed and the faster you



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perform them, the more damage you cause. There's also a bit of background interaction. Stand in one place too long and bombs are thrown at your feet; take a lot of damage and you're thrown a scrap of meat to replenish about 10% of your energy.

Now for the reasons why Shodown III has been banished to the Land of Tin. First, the average animation of the coin-op has been further weakened in the conversion process; frames have been removed from every character, leading to very stilted movement. (Even though the American version has been purportedly "sped up" — Shodown III fans were pretty livid

about this when I recently checked the rec.games.video.sony news group.) Second, the gameplay has a very stop-and-go rhythm that completely prevents you from getting into the flow of the fight. Third, the music and sound effects are hideous (just like in King of Fighters '95 — hmmm).

I'll give Samurai Shodown III the same score as Ben's ranking of King of Fighters '95 in the November issue, and I'll say the same thing he did: If you want 2D fighting perfection, you want Alpha 2. (I get the feeling I'll be saying that in reviews for the next year or so.) Samurai Shodown III simply isn't much fun to play or to watch.


Zach



THE BOTTOM LINE

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69%



HARD CORE 4x4

PUBLISHED BY ASC GAMES - DEVELOPED BY GREMLIN



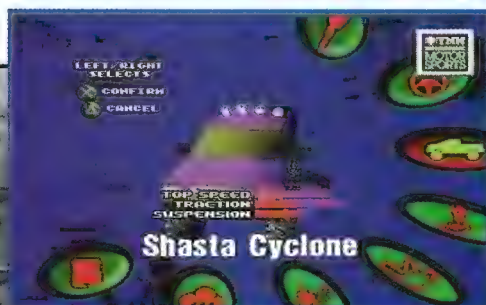
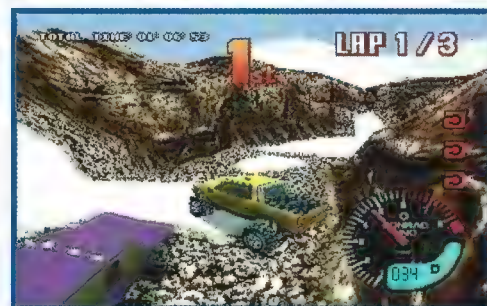
pit view. You can also choose between six different weather conditions, which is ultimately what should give Hardcore a longer than average shelf life. ASC has definitely put all the ingredients in; it's time to see how they cook.

Lets start off with the visual presentation. This is one of the best features and also one of the more frustrating aspects of the game. The folks at ASC set out to emphasize the precise physics of 4x4 racing above the look of the game. The end result in an intensely realistic driving experience that is difficult to navigate. As you go blasting through these canyons and forests, it becomes very difficult to differentiate between the road and the rest of the terrain. If you play the game long enough, you will develop a sense for it, although purely due to repetition. That being said, the rest of the driving experience is pure adrenaline, especially in the cockpit view. Spend enough time with this camera angle and you're sure to experience a little motion sickness.

The audio presentation also gets



EXTRATED



a mixed review. The background music is excellent; just what you'd need in this kind of driving environment. The running commentary, however, isn't as polished. Aside from the introductory sequence, at the beginning of each race, what you get are words like "bodacious", "cowabunga" & "hardcore" thrown at you, as you make your way through the track. Needless to say, the commentary could have used a little more attention. Last, but not least, is the gameplay. This is where ASC delivers big time. This game is just plain fun to play. The driving mechanics are perfect, you will

have no trouble controlling your vehicle through all kinds of rough terrain. Additionally, the AI is equally challenging in each difficulty level; you will be significantly challenged in every race. The only area where Hardcore 4x4 falls short is with the vehicles themselves. They look like they've been pasted to your screen and, with no license, they don't have any character. It would have been nice to have a little Chevy vs. Ford action. If Hardcore had a few vehicle licenses and a two player mode, it would definitely be a Gold title. As it stands, however, it comes in as a solid Silver title.

Alex

X

THE BOTTOM LINE

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87%

X

The PS Extreme Historical Ranking Chart

EXCAVATE is the section where we dig up the last six months of our old ratings and present them on one easy-to-read page, along with a little explanation/breakdown of our rating system. Use this as your buying guide throughout the year and as a reference for those older games that you might have missed (or wish you had).

PLATINUM GAMES	ISSUE	RATING
Tomb Raider	December 1996	99%
NCAA GameBreaker	October 1996	98%
Tekken 2	September 1996	98%
Crash Bandicoot	September 1996	98%
NHL Face Off '97	December 1996	98%

GOLD GAMES	ISSUE	RATING
Twisted Metal 2	December 1996	97%
Robotron X	December 1996	96%
Motor Toon Grand Prix	October 1996	95%
Formula 1	November 1996	95%
Fade to Black	July 1996	94%
Star Gladiator	October 1996	93%
Die Hard Trilogy	September 1996	93%
Jumping Flash 2	August 1996	93%
Disruptor	December 1996	93%
Bubsy 3D	December 1996	93%
Pandemonium	December 1996	93%
Ridge Racer Revolution	September 1996	92%
Triple Play 97	July 1996	92%
NHL Powerplay 96	July 1996	92%
Namco Museum Vol. 1	August 1996	92%
Tecmo's Deception	November 1996	92%
Machine Head	December 1996	92%
Destruction Derby 2	December 1996	92%
Tunnel B1	December 1996	92%
Street Fighter Alpha 2	October 1996	91%
Worms	September 1996	91%
International Track & Field	July 1996	91%
Contra: Legacy of War	December 1996	90%
Black Dawn	November 1996	90%
Bust-A-Move 2	August 1996	90%


SILVER GAMES	ISSUE	RATING
NBA Jam Extreme	December 1996	89%
Pitball	December 1996	89%
MLB Pennant Race	December 1996	89%
NHL 97	December 1996	89%
Andretti Racing	October 1996	89%
V Tennis	August 1996	89%
Burning Road	November 1996	88%
Top Gun	July 1996	88%


Wipeout XL	October 1996	88%
Final Doom	October 1996	87%
Adidas Power Soccer	August 1996	87%
Tobal No. 1	November 1996	87%
Tokyo Highway Battle	September 1996	86%
Skeleton Warriors	July 1996	86%
Epidemic	November 1996	86%
Project Overkill	September 1996	85%
Time Commando	November 1996	85%
Spot Goes to Hollywood	October 1996	84%
Battle Arena Toshinden 2	July 1996	84%
Legacy of Kain	October 1996	82%
Namco Museum Volume 2	November 1996	82%
Soviet Strike	December 1996	82%
Blast Chamber	December 1996	81%
NASCAR Racing	December 1996	80%


BRONZE GAMES	ISSUE	RATING
Floating Runner	July 1996	79%
Bogey: Dead Six	August 1996	79%
Perfect Weapon	November 1996	79%
Impact Racing	October 1996	78%
Gunship	September 1996	78%
Madden 97	October 1996	77%
Project: Horned Owl	August 1996	76%
Olympic Soccer	August 1996	75%
Beyond the Beyond	September 1996	73%
NFL Quarterback Club 97	November 1996	72%
Tecmo Super Bowl	November 1996	72%
Grid Runner	October 1996	71%
Space Hulk	August 1996	70%
Tecmo World Golf	August 1996	70%
Final Round Golf	July 1996	70%


TIN GAMES	ISSUE	RATING
Big Hurt Baseball	August 1996	69%
King of Fighters '95	November 1996	69%
Tetris Plus	November 1996	68%
Olympic Summer Games	September 1996	68%
Street Racer	December 1996	65%
Casper	November 1996	65%
Sim City 2000	September 1996	58%


WHAT DO ALL THOSE NUMBERS MEAN?

98-100%

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90-97%

GOLD
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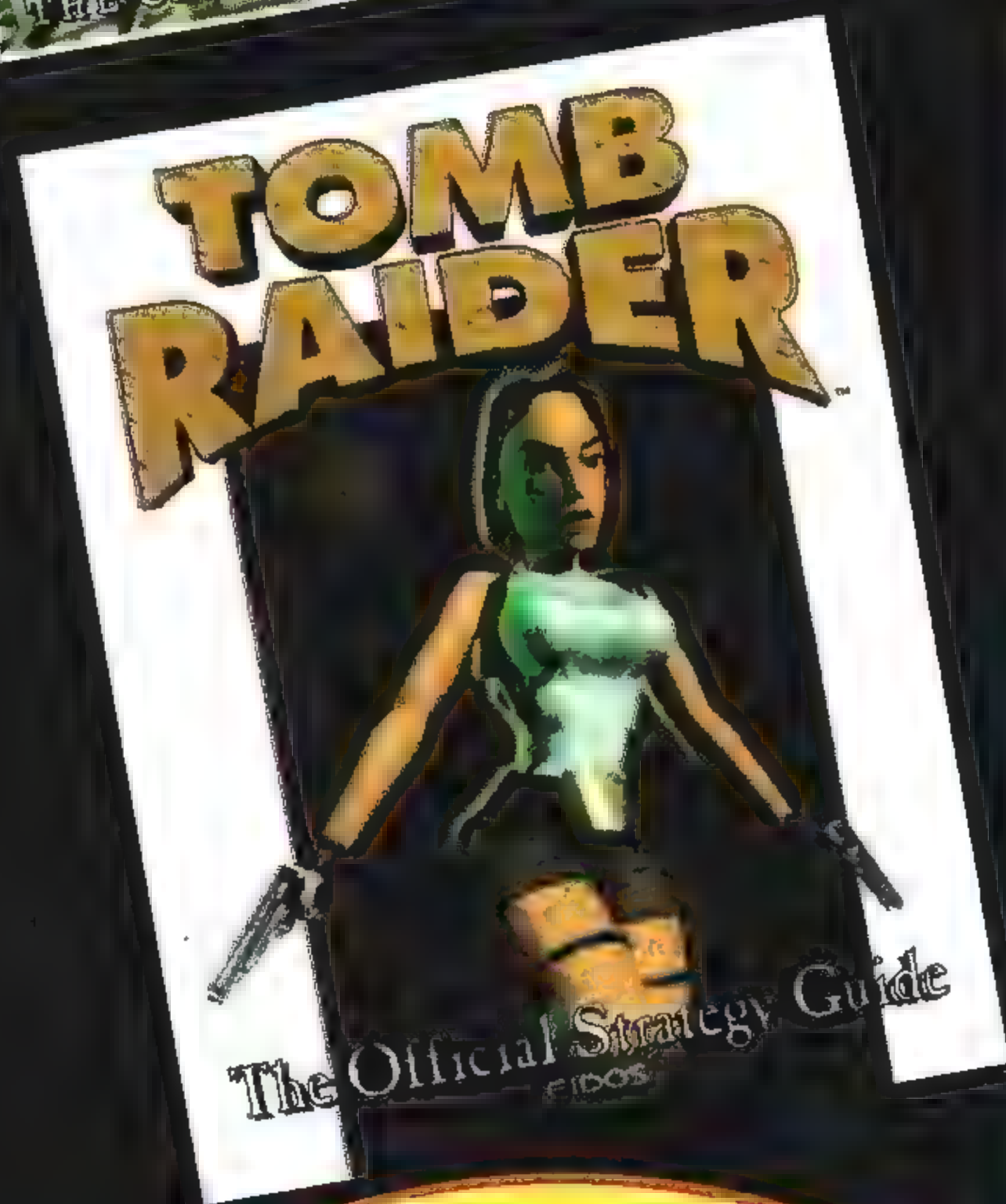
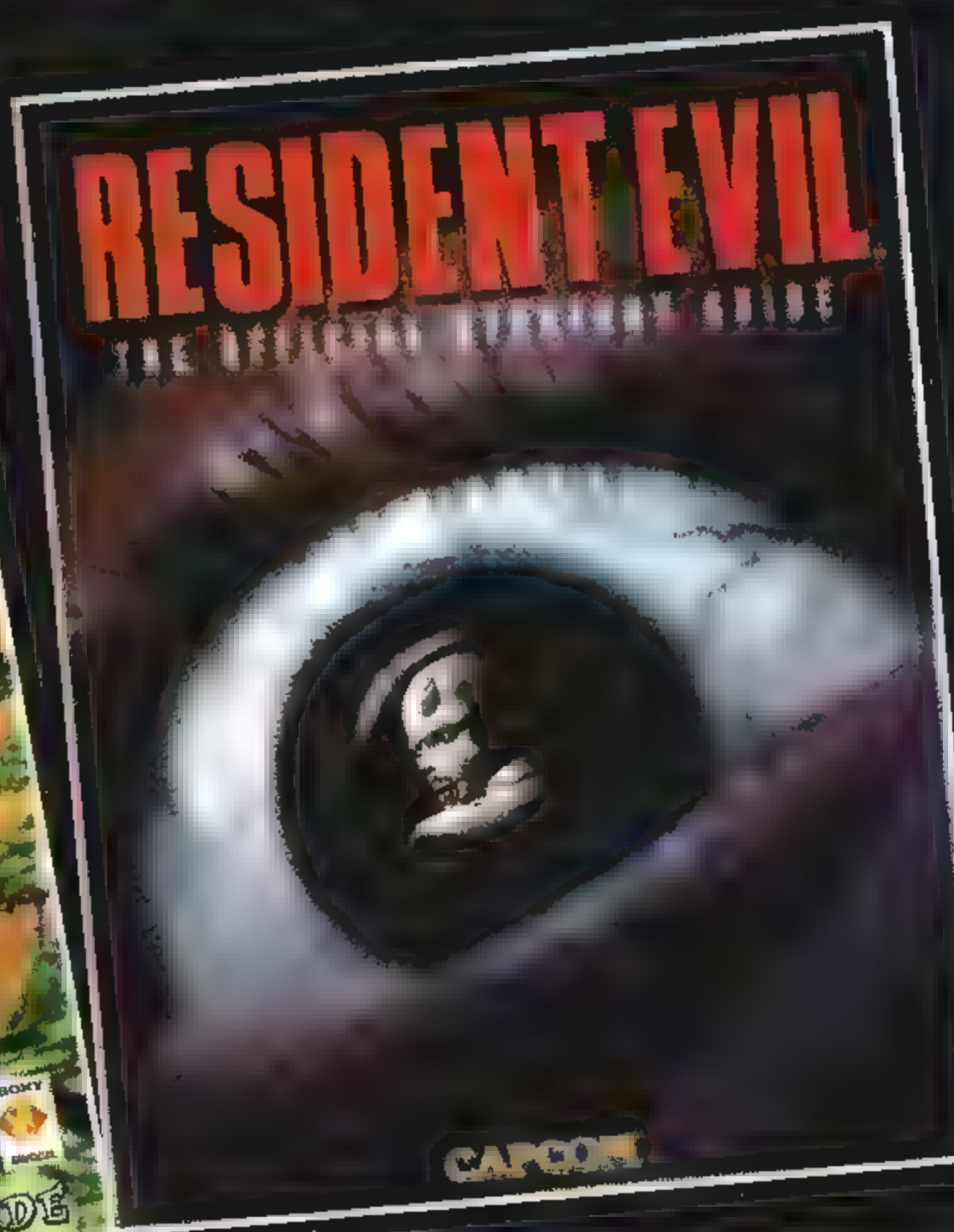
80-89%

SILVER
 Great games, but lacking in some area; usually, for fans of that style of game.

70-79%

BRONZE
 Mediocre titles that suffer from some serious flaws. Rent — don't buy.

0-69%

TIN
 Tin games are to be avoided at all costs. Only die-hard gamers would buy these.

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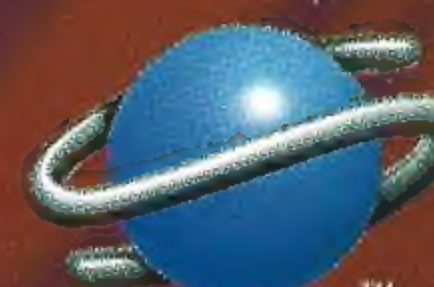
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